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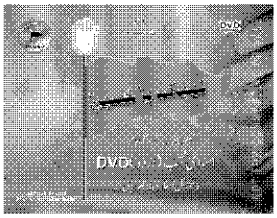

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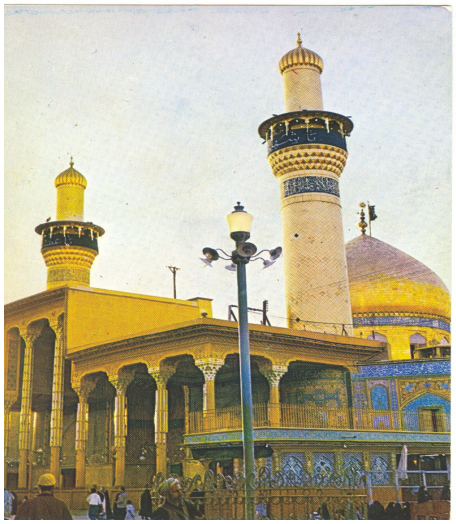
KERBALA AND BEYOND

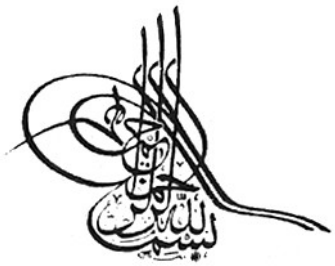
By

Yasin T. al-Jibouri



Shrine of Imam al-Husain (ع) in Kerbala, Iraq

KERBALA AND BEYOND



In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Preface

This is the third of eight books written so far by Yasin T. al-Jibouri. The first was *Fast of the Month of Ramadan: Philosphy and Ahkam*, and the second was his best book yet titled *Allah: the Concept of God in Islam*, and we pray there will be many more! Since the reader is most likely interested in knowing who the author is, we would like to state the following:

Al-Jibouri was born on August 14, 1946 in Baghdad, Iraq, and he lived most of his life in the holy city of Kazimain. In 1969, he graduated from the College of Arts, Baghdad University, where he majored in English which he taught at a high school in Babylon (Hilla) then at a vocational institute in al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, from which he flew in 1972 to the United States in order to pursue his Graduate degree which he earned in 1978. In the Winter of 1973, he founded the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc. and started in January of 1974 editing and publishing its newsletter Islamic Affairs which evolved from a four-page newsletter to a twelve-page bulletin, becoming the most widely circulated Shi'a publication in the United States with readers in all the 50 U.S. States and in 67 countries world-wide.

In 1975, al-Jibouri received instructions to facilitate the entry to the

United States of the very first representative of the then Supreme Ayatullah Abul-Qasim al-Khoei, may Allah reward him, in North America, namely Shaikh Muhammed Sarwar of Quetta, Pakistan who, due to the sponsorship of the author, did, indeed, arrive at the U.S. on January 25, 1976; a few days later, the Shaikh became al-Jibouri's room-mate. A few months later, the Shaikh moved from Atlanta to New York where there has been a much larger Shi'a population.

Al-Jibouri not only writes his books, but he also typesets them and often designs their covers as well. He developed a passion for computers, hardware and software, and in March of 1988, he obtained a Certificate with honours from N.R.I. of Washington, D.C., in microcomputers and microprocessors and later added to it three more Certificates in electronics and programming, including advanced programming. Putting that knowledge together, he wrote more than a hundred dBASE programs in order to accommodate his extensive and sophisticated mailing list and those of others, proving that we all ought to put modern technology at the service of Islam and Muslims. Presently, he is working as a full-time reporter while studying to be an Oracle Developer and Database Administrator, and he hopes to spend the last years of his life designing web-sites for various Shi'a organizations throughout the world that utilize the Internet to get their message across. Indeed, the Internet is the wave of the future. It provides us with the fastest and cheapest way of communication and advertising as well as publicizing for our faith. If you have access to the Internet, you may search for his numerous articles under the name "Jibouri" while using your search engine.

The author has edited and revised three English translations of the Holy Qur'an by: 1) S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, 2) A. Yusuf Ali, and 3) M.H. Shakir. He also edited and typeset several newsletters and magazines, including Middle East Business Magazine of which he became Senior Editor. Among the other books which he edited are: Socio-Economic Justice with Particular Reference to Nahjul-Balagha by Dr. S.M. Waseem, and A Biography of Leaders of Islam by Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqwi, English translation by Dr. Sayyid Nazir Hasan Zaidi. He also edited 14 pamphlets for the youths titled The Fourteen Infallibles which

were published in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1419 A.H./1998 A.D. and which were originally written by M.N. Sultan. They are very professionally produced pamphlets that employ pictorial narratives and an easy and flowing style, and they ought to be in the possession of each and every Muslim family raising children and caring for the youths.

The Author has also translated five other books where his name as the Translator was deliberately omitted for selfish reasons; these are: 1) Best Month, Best Night; 2) The Book of Istikhara; 3)Weapon of the Prophets; 4) Miracles of the Holy Qur'an and 5) The Great Names of Allah.

So far, the list of the books which he has written includes the following titles arranged chronologically according to their completion but not necessarily the date of publication: 1) *Memoirs of a Shi'a Missionary in America: Two Decades of Dawah* (his auto-biography which details his experience in Islamic work in the U.S.), 2) *Fast of the Month of Ramadan: Philosophy and Ahkam*, 3) *Mary and Jesus in Islam*, 4) *Allah: the Concept of God in Islam*, 5) *Muhammed: Prophet and Messenger of Allah*, 6) *The Ninety-Nine Attributes of Allah*, 7) *Kerbala' and Beyond* (this book), and 8) *Ghadir Khumm: Where Islam was Perfected*.

In 1980, when Imam Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr was martyred, al-Jibouri shifted his attention to politics, putting out several pamphlets, circulars, letters to the news media and two newsletters, Islamic Revival and Rafidain News. Islamic Revival was dedicated to the Islamic liberation movements throughout the Muslim world in general and in Iraq in particular, and it strongly supported the Islamic Revolution in Iran which was being viciously attacked and distorted by the anti-Islamic racist and hateful Jewish Zionist news media in the U.S.

Al-Jibouri is a well known translator, and he is the very first person ever to translate the works of the Martyr Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr, the greatest economist, philosopher, author and political figure in the modern history of Iraq, such as: A General Outlook at

Rituals (which was printed in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, in 1979), Contemporary Man and the Social Problem (which was also published in Tehran in 1980), The General Bases of Banking in the Muslim Society (which was published in Maryland, U.S.A., in 1981), and What Do You Know About Islamic Economics? which was published by the Imamia Center of Lanham, Maryland, U.S.A., in the month of Ramadan 1410 A.H./April 1990 A.D. Al-Jibouri twice published his translation titled A General Outlook at Rituals here in the U.S., getting their latest registered with the Library of Congress of Washington, D.C. He also translated and/or published many other titles; among them are: A Biography of Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr, The Form of Islamic Government and Wilayat al-Faqeeh, About the World Political Situation from a Muslim's Viewpoint, and Our Faith. The latter work is written by Sayyid Muhammed Husain al-Jalali, a famous scholar, researcher, critic and theologian now living in Chicago, Illinois. Other works he translated are: A Biography of Imam al-Rida (by the late Shaikh Muhammed Jawad Fadlallah; this book was published in the United Kingdom), Al-Murajaat: A Shii-Sunni Dialogue (by Sharifud-Deen Sadr ad-Deen al-Masawi; this book was published in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1415 A.H./1995 A.D. and had previously been translated and published under the title The Right Path), Shi'as are the Ahl al-Sunnah (by Dr. Muhammed al-Tijani al-Samawi; this book was published in New York in 1996 in New York by Vantage Press and is available for sale on the Internet from both Amazon Books and Barnes and Noble Books, and its ISBN number is: 0-533-12055-1 and the reader is strongly urged to get his/her own copy of it; its first copies were sold "like hot cakes;" therefore, Vantage Press had to reprint it all over again), and Maqtal al-Husain by the late Abd al-Razzaq al-Muqarram, which is the major reference utilized for the writing of this book. The Author is now translating Al-Ihtijaj by allama Abu Mansur Ahmed ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib al-Tibrisi, a 6th century A.H. (12th century A.D.) scholar.

Al-Jibouri has also written numerous essays and articles dealing with various themes. Most of them were published in more than one publication, whereas he circulated the others on his own throughout the U.S. and abroad. Several of his articles were published in Islamic

Monitor, a fairly short-lived magazine (lived for less than 3 years) which used to be published here in Washington, D.C. Among such articles carried the following headings: “An Interview with Professor Fazlallah Reza” (once chancellor of the University of Tehran, Ambassador at Paris to the United Nation’s UNESCO and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Canada), “Violation of Women’s Rights in Saudi Arabia,” “Bahrain: A Shameful Human Rights Record,” “The Drug Epidemic,” and many others. Some of his political writings appeared in Echo of Islam. His other writings also appeared in Mahjubah magazine of Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, and in Jafari Observer magazine of Bombay, India, and elsewhere.

Yasin T. al-Jibouri has received recognition from both Muslims and non-Muslims in the U.S. and abroad. He is discussed in detail by Prof. Larry Poston in his book Islamic Dawah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam (New York, United States, and Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1992; ISBN No. 0-19-507227-8). One of the essays which he wrote and circulated is an extensive, thorough and extremely well researched rebuttal to Samuel P. Huntington’s famous article “The Clash of Civilizations?” which appeared in Foreign Affairs magazine in the Summer of 1993. His rebuttal is actually a laborious research which exhausted two weeks of his time and many sleepless nights and is dated October 26, 1993. May the Almighty assist us and keep our feet firm on His Right Path, Assirat al-Mustaqeem, Allahomma AAameen.

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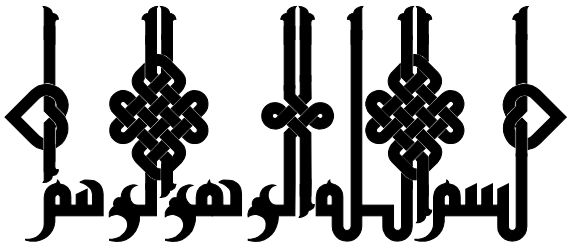

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

INTRODUCTION

This book contains a brief yet documented narrative of an incident that took place in Kerbala', Iraq, in 61 A.H. (After Hijra, or Hegira)/680 A.D. It has stamped the history of the Muslim nation ever since, and it will continue to do so till the reappearance of the Awaited One, the Mahdi from among the offspring of Prophet Muhammed (ص). It refers to a revolution against tyranny and oppression led by Imam al-Husain (ع) son of Imam Ali ibn [son of] Abu [father of] Talib (ع) and grandson of Prophet Muhammed (ص). The confrontation left a lone male survivor from Imam al-Husain's camp: Imam al-Husain's son Ali, titled "as-Sajjad," the one who quite often prostrates to Allah, and also "Zain al-Abidin," the best of worshippers of Allah. He later became the fourth in the series of the Twelve Infallible Imams (ع). His offspring migrated to north Africa where they founded the Fatimide caliphate that lasted from 296 - 566 A.H./909 - 1171 A.D. Having conquered Egypt in 358 A.H./969 A.D., they built Cairo in order to make it their capital and founded in the next year the al-Azhar mosque and university. The latter was founded by caliph "al-Muizz li Deenillah," Abu Tameem Maadd ibn al-Mansur who was born in 319 A.H./931 A.D. and died in 365 A.H./975 A.D.; he ruled from 341 A.H./953 A.D. till his death.

The bloody confrontation between Husain's tiny group of family members and supports and the huge army raized according to orders issued by the ruler of his time, namely Yazid "son" of Mu'awiyah , which is referred to in history books as the Taff Battle, started on the first day of Muharram, 61 A.H.October 4, 680 A.D. and ended ten days later with the barbaric killing of Imam al-Husain (ع) and all males with him–with the exception of his ailing son referred to above, namely Ali–, including his infant Abdullah, who was six months old and who was shot with an arrow in the neck. Imam al-Husain (ع) was pleading to those folks to give Abdullah some water to drink. Imam al-Husain (ع) and his small band were not permitted to the end to have access to the water of the Euphrates that lied a short distance from their camp. This reveals the extent of cruelty of those who fought Imam al-Husain (ع) and his small band of supporters, the brave defender of principles and the reformer of the nation that he was, the man whom the Prophet on many occasions praised and honoured as one of the Masters of the Youths of Paradise, the other Master being his older brother Hasan (ع). Imam al-Husain's body was trampled under the hoofs of the soldiers' horses and his head was cut off, placed on top of a spear and paraded before his women and children, who were all tied and chained as captives and conveyed in the most cruel manner the entire distance from Kerbala', as the Taff area came to be called, to Damascus, Syria, seat of the Umayyad tyrant Yazid "son" of Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan. The heads of the other heroes who fought on Imam al-Husain's side were also cut off and paraded in the same manner as trophies although Islam does not permit the mutilation of anyone's body, be he a Muslim or a non-Muslim. Little did those killers care to know about Islam, and the same can be said about those who refrain from condemning them and who, thus, share in the burden of sins those killers shall bear on the Day of Judgment.

The primary sources of this book are: Maqtal al-Husain by Abdul-Razzaq al-Masawi al-Muqarram, and Tarikh al-Umam wal Mulak by Abu Ja'far Muhammed ibn Jarar at-Tabari (better known as Tarikh at-Tabari). Several secondary references, in Arabic and English, have been consulted and are cited in elaborate footnotes.

It is hoped that this book will open the eyes of new Muslim converts in

the West in general and here in the U.S. in particular so that they may see the other side of the coin. Most of them were not taught Islamic history because, in most likelihood, it would indict their mentors. It is also hoped that such converts will realize the pitfalls of little knowledge which is surely a dangerous thing.

There is a story behind every book. This one is no exception. As of the date of writing this Introduction (Shawwal 1419 A.H./February 1999), Northern Virginia Muslims who love and revere Imam Husain (ع) do not have a place of their own where they can assemble to commemorate the Kerbala' tragedy, the greatest of all; therefore, they have to meet here and there, mostly at homes and apartments of their brethren who can accommodate them. The most prominent of such dedicated brethren have been: Hamzah al-Shawwaf (nicknamed Abu Muhammed-Ali), Abdul-Muhsin al-Sa'igh (Abu Abdul-Aziz), and Ahmed al-Haddad (Abu Abdullah). These brethren have always opened their homes and hearts to all those who cherish the memory of Imam Husain (ع) and of all other Imams belonging to the Prophet's Progeny, "Ahl al-Bayt," peace and blessings of Allah be upon all of them. During the past commemoration (Muharram 1419/May 1998), an Azari brother named Salashour who runs a rug store tried his best to make us feel at home, permitting us to use the premises of his business for the first ten days of the month of Muharram. It was there and then that another very dedicated brother named Ja'far Madan suggested that I write a few pages in English about the martyrdom of Imam Husain (ع) in order to circulate them on the Internet. Alhamdu-Lillah, both I and he did what we promised. Then Br. Madan asked me whether I would consider turning those few pages into a book for the American and Europrean readers. We liked the idea. You see, a good word, a wise suggestion, is like a seed; if it finds the right soil, it will shoot roots and sprout, and soon a seed becomes a tree bearing fruit, and the fruit carry seeds that will eventually be sowed, and they, too, will set roots, sprout and bear fruit..., and so on. May the Almighty bless and reward our dear brother Ja'far Madan for his suggestion, and may He bless all other dedicated brethren like him. May He forever guide our steps to what He loves and prefers, *Allahomma AAameen*.

As the Dedication suggests, the publication of this book has been made

possible by the generosity of a number of such dedicated lovers of Imam al-Husain (ع), and of his Ahl al-Bayt (ع), and who reside in metropolitan Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. The author apologizes if some of the photographs are not of good quality. May the Almighty reward all those who brought this book to light and who circulate it and help others benefit from it with the very best of His rewards in the life of this world and in the hereafter, *Allahomma AAameen*.

PROLOGUE

THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG

This is a tale of an ongoing struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, piety and impiety, worldliness and spirituality. Such struggles take place in our life each and every day on different scales. Other religions, too, have immortalized the struggle between right and wrong: the struggle of Rama against Ravana, the contest between Moses, peace be with him, and Pharaoh, the challenge of Abraham, peace be with him, to Nimrud, the contest of Jesus Christ, peace be with him, against Herod... All these are examples of the contest, the struggle, the ongoing war, between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. Falsehood appears to the eyes of most people as being very strong, armed with material power. It has the authority of the ruling government, of the veto at the "U.N. Security Council," of the awe of military might, the carriers and the cruise missiles, the satellites and the spy planes, the lackeys and the stooges, the silver and the gold, and the numerical superiority... Its ostentatious grandeur and splendour cannot be denied, nor can its glittering crowns, thrones studded with gems, palaces and dazzling swords... And the truth! The humble truth! The meek and weak truth! It appears helpless, handicapped, powerless... But the truth possesses the vigor of faith, the reliance on the Almighty God, and the precious asset of spiritual power. These armaments of the truth are so powerful, they smash the head of falsehood, reducing its splendour and grandeur to dust. Truth, in the end, triumphs, achieving success so splendidly that the world is awe-stricken thereat... Such is the epic of heroism recorded on the pages of history not with the ink of the writers but with the blood of the martyrs. Such is each and every epic of heroism... Such is the epic of martyrdom of Imam al-Husain (ع).

PART I

HUSAIN AND HIS FOES, MARTYRDOM

ABU SUFYAN

Abu Sufyan was a wealthy and influential man who belonged to the Banu Umayyah clan of the once pagan tribe of Quraish of Mecca, Hijaz, that fought the spread of Islam relentlessly during the time of the Prophet of Islam (ع). He was contemporary to the Prophet of Islam (ع) whom he fought vigorously. His date of birth is unknown, but he died in 31 A.H./652 A.D. “Abu Sufyan” is his kunya, surname; his name is Sakhr ibn Harb ibn Umayyah. He is father of Mu'awiyah and grandfather of Yazid.

Abu Sufyan led pagan Quraish in its many wars against Prophet Muhammed (ص) and his small band of supporters, making alliances with other pagan tribes and with the Jews of Medina against the new rising power of Islam. He kept leading one battle after another till the fall of Mecca to the Muslims in 630 A.D. It was then that he had to either accept the Islamic faith or face a sure death for all the mischief he had committed against the Muslims, so he preferred to live in hypocrisy as a "Muslim," though only in name, rather than accept death. He was the most cunning man in all of Arabia and one of its aristocrats and men of might and means. He saw Islam as the harbinger of the waning of his own personal power and prestige and those of his tribe, Quraish, not to mention the decline of his faith, paganism, and the pre-Islamic way of life to which he and his likes were very much accustomed, the life of promiscuity, lewdness and debauchery, with all the wine, women and wealth aristocrats like him very much enjoyed. His likes are present throughout the Islamic lands in our time and in every time and clime... This has always been so, and it shall unfortunately remain so...

MUAWIYAH AND YAZID

Mu'awiyah son of Abu Sufyan was born out of wedlock in 602 A.D. during the jahiliyya, the time of ignorance, the period that preceded Islam. His mother, Maysun, was one of his father's slave-girls. Maysan had a sexual intercourse with one of Mu'awiyah's slaves and conceived Yazid by him. Mu'awiyah, in total disregard for Islamic or traditional Arab traditions, claimed Yazid as his son. A testimony to this fact is the well-documented tradition of the Prophet (ص) wherein he said, "The murderer of my [grand]son al-Husain is a bastard." This tradition is quoted on p. 156, Vol. 1, of Kanz al-Ummal of al-Muttaqi al-Hindi. The stigma of being a bastard applies actually not only to Yazid but also to both Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan and Ubaydullah ibn Sa'd, the accomplices about whom the reader will read later; all of these men were born out of wedlock.

Mu'awiyah played a major role in distorting the Islamic creed by paying writers to tailor design "traditions" to serve his interests and support his deviated views. He installed himself as ruler of Syria in 40 A.H./661 A.D. and ruled for twenty long years till his death at the age of seventy-eight. Shortly before his death, which took place in the month of Rajab of 60 A.H./May of 680 A.D., he managed to secure the oath of allegiance to his corrupt and immoral son Yazid as his successor. He did so by intimidation once and once by buying loyalty and favours, spending in the process huge sums of money that belonged to the Muslims. The weak-minded majority of the Muslims of his time swore allegiance to him. This proves that the majority does not necessarily have to be right. Imam al-Husain (ع), together with a small band of devotees to the cause of truth, refused to bow their heads to the oppressive forces, hence this tale of heroism.

Mu'awiyah declared himself "caliph" in Syria when he was 59 years old and assumed authority by sheer force. He was not elected, nor was he requested to take charge. He did not hide this fact; rather, he bragged about it once when he addressed the Kufians saying, "O people of Kufa! Do you think that I fought you in order that you may establish prayers or give zakat or perform the pilgrimage?! I know that you do pray, pay zakat and perform the pilgrimage. Indeed, I fought you in order to take command over you with contempt, and Allah has given me that against your wishes. Rest assured that whoever killed any of us

will himself be killed. And the treaty between us of amnesty is under my feet."[1]

Mu'awiyah's rule was terror in the whole Muslim land. Such terrorism was spread by many convoys sent to various regions. Historians have narrated saying that Muawiyh summoned Sufyan ibn 'Awf al-Ghamidi, one of the commanders of his army, and said to him, "This army is under your command. Proceed along the Euphrates River till you reach Heet. Any resistance you meet on your way should be crushed, and then you should proceed to invade Anbar. After that, penetrate deeply into Mada'in. O Sufyan! These invasions will frighten the Iraqis and please those who like us. Such campaigns will attract frightened people to our side. Kill whoever holds different views from ours; loot their villages and demolish their homes. Indeed, fighting them against their livelihood and taking their wealth away is similar to killing them but is more painful to their hearts."[2]

Another of his commanders, namely Bishr ibn Arta'ah, was summoned and ordered to proceed to Hijaz and Yemen with these instructions issued by Mu'awiyah: "Proceed to Medina and expel its people. Meanwhile, people in your way, who are not from our camp, should be terrorized. When you enter Medina, let it appear as if you are going to kill them. Make it appear that your aim is to exterminate them. Then pardon them. Terrorize the people around Mecca and Medina and scatter them around."[3]

During Mu'awiyah's reign, basic human rights were denied, not simply violated. No one was free to express his views. Government spies were paid to terrorize the public, assisting the army and the police in sparing no opportunity to crush the people and to silence their dissent. There are some documents which reveal Mu'awiyah's instructions to his governors to do just that. For instance, the following letter was addressed to all judges: "Do not accept the testimony of Ali's followers

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1 Ibn Abul-Hadid, *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 16, p. 15.

2 *Ibid*., Vol. 2, p. 86.

3 *Ibid*.

(Shi'as) or of his descendants in (your) courts." Another letter stated: "If you have evidence that someone likes Ali and his family, omit his name from the recipients of rations stipulated from the *zakat* funds." Another letter said, "Punish whoever is suspected of following Ali and demolish his house."[1] Such was the situation during the government of Mu'awiyah, Yazid's infamous father. Historians who were recording these waves of terror described them as unprecedented in history. People were so frightened, they did not mind being called atheists, thieves, etc., but not followers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Prophet Muhammed's right hand, confidant and son-in-law.

Another aspect of the government of Mu'awiyah was the racist discrimination between Arabs and non-Arabs. Although they were supposed to have embraced Islam which tolerates no racism in its teachings, non-Arabs were forced to pay *khiraj* and *jizya* taxes that are levied from non-Muslims living under the protection of Muslims and enjoying certain privileges, including the exemption from the military service. A non-Arab soldier fighting in the state's army used to receive bare subsistence from the rations. Once, a dispute flared up between an Arab and a non-Arab and both were brought to court. The judge, namely Abdullah ibn amir, heard the non-Arab saying to his Arab opponent, "May Allah not permit people of your kind (i.e. Arabs) to multiply." The Arab answered him by saying, "O Allah! I invoke You to multiply their (non-Arabs') population among us!" People present there and then were bewildered to hear such a plea, so they asked him, "How do you pray for this man's people to multiply while he prays for yours to be diminished?!" The Arab opponent said, "Yes, indeed, I do so! They clean our streets and make shoes for our animals, and they weave our clothes!"

Imam al-Husain's older brother, Imam al-Hasan (ع), was elected in Medina on the 21st of the month of Ramadan, 40 A.H./January 28, 661 A.D. as the caliph, but his caliphate did not last long due to the terrorism promoted by Mu'awiyah who either intimidated, killed, or bribed the most distinguished men upon whom Imam al-Hasan (ع) depended to run the affairs of the government. Finally, Mu'awiyah

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1 *Ibid.*

pushed Imam al-Hasan (ع) out of power after signing a treaty with him the terms of which were, indeed, honourable and fair, had they only been implemented. Finding his men too weak or too reluctant to fight Mu'awiyah, Imam al-Hasan (ع) had no alternative except to sign the said treaty with a man whom he knew very well to be the most hypocritical of all and the most untrustworthy. Since there are too many ignorant folks who dare to blaspheme and cast doubt about the integrity of Imam al-Hasan (ع), we have to review the terms of that treaty and leave the reader to draw his own conclusion; those terms, in brief, were:a

1) Mu'awiyah shall rule according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ص) in the territories under his control.
2) Mu'awiyah shall have no right to nominate his successor.
3) All people in Syria, Iraq, Hizaj and Yemen shall lead their lives safely and securely.
4) The lives and properties of the followers (Shi'as) of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), wherever they may be, shall remain safe and secure.
5) Mu'awiyah shall not try, openly or secretly, to harm or to kill Imam al-Hasan (ع) son of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), his brother Imam al-Husain (ع), or any other member of the family of the Prophet (ص), nor shall they be threatened or terrorized.
6) The abusive language, the cursing of Imam Ali (ع) during prayer services (ordered by Mu'awiyah and continued after his death for a long period of time) at the Grand Mosque of Damascus shall be stopped.

Mu'awiyah had ordered all Imams who led congregational prayers not to descend from their pulpits before cursing Ali (ع), a practice which they labeled as "Sunnah." It is documented that one such Imam forgot once to curse Ali (ع), whereupon people shouted at him that he had violated the Sunnah. Those who prayed at home and who forgot to curse Ali (ع) after their prayers felt obligated to repeat them, being convinced that such cursing was an integral part of the compulsory prayers without which they would not be accepted by Allah... Such abominable blasphemy continued from the year when Uthman was killed, that is, 35 A.H./656 A.D. till it was terminated by orders of the only righteous Umayyad caliph, namely Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz, one

year after his becoming caliph, that is, in 100 A.H../718 A.D., for a total of 62 years. Historians say that the public actually did not stop cursing Ali (ع) even then but continued to do so for at least 18 more years, extending the total to 80 years... Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz was killed in 101 A.H./719 A.D. after having ruled for only two years and five months because he was fair and just and, most importantly, because he was sympathetic to the Prophet's family (Ahl al-Bayt); peace and blessings of Allah be with him.

Shortly after concluding the said treaty, Mu'awiyah lured Imam al-Hasan's wife, Juda daughter of al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, into poisoning her husband with the promise that he would marry her off to his son and heir apparent Yazid. Juda killed her husband who died on Safar 28, 50 A.H./March 30, 670 A.D. She was cursed by the Almighty with an embarrassing ailment for which nobody could find any cure. Mu'awiyah, as expected, did not fulfill his promise.

Having succeeded in getting Imam al-Hasan (ع), Imam al-Husain's older brother, killed, Mu'awiyah sent letters to one of his Umayyad relatives, namely Marwan ibn al-Hakam, a cousin of Uthman ibn Affan and bearer of his seal, a seal which he used quite often for his own gains and even without the knowledge of the aging caliph, instructing him to obtain the oath of allegiance for his son Yazid as his (Mu'awiyah's) successor. By the way, the Umayyads succeeded in making this same Marwan caliph in 64 A.H./683 A.D., and his government lasted for seventeen months till it ended in 65 A.H./684-85 A.D. when he died at the age of 63 and was buried in Damascus. Marwan, accordingly, delivered a speech following the prayers and concluded it by saying, "The commander of the faithful (meaning Mu'awiyah) is of the view that he chooses his son Yazid to succeed him as your ruler following in the footsteps of Abu Bakr and Omer ibn al-Khattab..." He was at that moment interrupted by Abdul-Rahman son of first caliph Abu Bakr. "Nay!," Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr shouted, "You mean in the footsteps of Kisra (Khosro, emperor of Persia) and Caesar (emperor of Rome)! Neither Abu Bakr nor Omer appointed their sons or relatives as their successors...!"

In 51 A.H./671 A.D., Mu'awiyah performed the pilgrimage then went

to Medina where he called to his presence Abdullah son of second caliph Omer ibn al-Khattab. His father, Omer , succeeded Abu Bakr as the caliph in 13 A.H./634 A.D.; he remained caliph for ten years till he was killed by a Persian slave in the month of Thul-Hijja, 23 A.H./November 644 A.D. He was succeeded by Uthman ibn Affan who ruled for eleven years (till 35 A.H./656 A.D.). Mu'awiyah said to Abdullah ibn Omer, "O son of Omer ! You used to tell me that you never liked to sleep one night without knowing who your Imam (here the word means "ruler") is, and I warn you against spreading the seeds of dissension among the Muslims or corrupting their views." Abdullah praised Allah then said, "There were other caliphs before you who had sons who were not inferior to yours, yet they did not decide to do what you have decided to do regarding your son. Rather, they let the Muslims make their own choice. You warn me against dissension, and I am not an advocate of dissension. I am just one of the Muslims, and if they are unanimous regarding an issue, I will then add my voice to theirs." Having said so, Abdullah left. Then Muhammed, son of first caliph Abu Bakr, referred to above, was presented before Mu'awiyah. The latter started his rhetoric but Abdul-Rahman interrupted him by saying, "All you want to say is that you wish we obey your son after obeying Allah, and this, by Allah, we will never do. And, by Allah, we shall settle this issue by mutual consultation among the Muslims; otherwise, we will treat you as you were treated at the dawn of Islam...!" Then he, too, stood up and left.

Yazid son of Mu'awiyah was born in 17 A.H./645 A.D. and inherited his father’s post in 60 A.H./680 A.D. He ruled for only three years and one month then died in mid-Rab'iul-Awwal of 64 A.H./December 14, 683 A.D. at the young age of 38. He was a playboy, a drunkard, and a man who used to enjoy seeing animals fight. He used to play with animals. Monkeys were dressed in gold-embroidered multi-colored clothes and trained to dance for him, and he had salaried "officials" to look after his animal collection. Such collection included monkeys and race dogs. He was fond of gambling and wine drinking, and he demonstrated disrespect towards the Mosque of the Prophet (ص) and towards the Ka'ba itself, causing very serious damages to its structure as the reader will come to know in a later part of this book. He forced women to take their veils off and killed thousands of innocent people

and encouraged the rape of women, girls, and children during the uprisings that took place in Hijaz, particularly in the Harra incident, details of which will follow. In short, Yazid did not have one iota of respect for Islamic tenets or moral ethics. Strange enough, there are some ignorant Muslims who sing his praise, justify and defend his barbaric conduct...

This much gives the reader an idea about what type of persons Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah, and Yazid were. Now let us review the brief biography of their opponents.

ALI, HUSAIN'S FATHER

Imam al-Husain's father, Ali (ع), needs no introduction, but for the benefit of those who do not know much about him, we would like to state the following:

Ali was born in May of 600 A.D. inside the Ka'ba, the holiest of all holy places in Islam, the cubic symbol of "Allah's House" in Mecca, Hijaz, northern part of today's Saudi Arabia, the only country in the world named after its ruling dynasty! No other human being was ever born in the holiest of holies besides him. Ali (ع) was raised and cared for by his cousin Muhammed (ص), the Messenger of Allah, who wished to return the favor Ali's father had done him when he was a child. You see, when Muhammed (ص) was orphaned, Ali's father, Abu Talib, took him in his custody and raised him, so Muhammed (ص) wanted to return the favor especially after seeing how Abu Talib's trade business was not doing well in his old age. Muhammed (ص)'s upbringing of Ali (ع) polished the lad's personality and prepared him to play a major role in the dissemination of the Islamic creed. He was the first male to believe in Muhammed (ص) and to offer prayers with him. The second was another young man who was also raised and cared for by Muhammed (ص), namely Zaid ibn Harithah who later commanded the army of the Muslims during the Battle of Mu'ta of 629 A.D., and so did his son Usamah in 632 A.D., both proving their military ability, insight and wisdom. The third to embrace the Islamic faith was Muhammed's longtime friend Abu Bakr.

When pagan Meccans wanted to assassinate Muhammed (ص) in 622

A.D., Ali (ع) slept in his (Muhammed's) bed, offering his life as a sacrifice to save his, while the Prophet succeeded in leaving his house safely even under the nose of the infidels, having recited the first eight verses of Surat Yasin (Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'an) and thrown a handful of dust before their eyes. They could not see him leave. Muhammed (ص) safely reached Quba, a suburb of Medina where he camped and waited for Ali (ع) to rejoin him. He did not want to enter Medina triumphantly without Ali (ع). After a few days, Ali (ع) walked all alone the entire distance from Mecca to Medina, about 250 Arabian miles, arriving there with swollen and lacerated feet, bleeding and fatigued.

Ali (ع) defended Islam in the Battle of Badr (624 A.D.) and married Fatima, the Prophet's only surviving offspring, in the same year. He also fought in the Battle of Uhud in the next year, in the Battle of Moat (Khandaq) in 627 A.D., in the Battle of Khayber (against the Jews of Medina) in 628 A.D., and took part in the Conquest of Mecca in 630 A.D. He also fought in the Battle of Hunain in the same year. On Thul-Hijjah 18, 10 A.H., corresponding to March 19, 632 A.D., and according to divine orders which Muhammed (ص) had received from his Lord in the form of Qur'anic verse No. 67 of Surat al-Ma'ida (Chapter 5), the Prophet of Islam delivered a speech at a place between Mecca and Medina known as Ghadir Khumm in the Juhfa valley wherein he enumerated some of Ali's merits and informed the huge crowd of an estimated 132,000 pilgrims who had accompanied him during his last pilgrimage, the Farewell Pilgrimage, that just as they had accepted him as the Prophet, they were bound to accept Ali (ع) as "Ameerul-Mo'mineen," Commander of the Faithful, title of one who rules the Muslims as the supreme political leader and, at the same time, as the highest religious authority. Details of and references to this historic event are recorded, with the entire original Arabic text (23 pages) of the Prophet's historic sermon, are in my book titled Ghadir Khumm: Where Islam was Perfected.

Because of the numerous battles in which Ali (ع) participated and the number of those whom he killed, he was not popular with those who considered blood relations more important than earning the Pleasure of the Almighty; therefore, only a few months after that date did some

people promote Abu Bakr, a wealthy Meccan and a very successful businessman, to the post of "Ameerul-Mo'mineen." This took place in 11 A.H./632 A.D. He ruled for two years and a half, dying on a Tuesday, 13 A.H./634 A.D. at the age of 63... They promoted Abu Bakr to be "Ameerul-Mo'minnen" instead of Ali (ع), forgetting or pretending to forget what they had heard from and pledged to the Prophet (ص) only two months and nine days ago at Ghadir Khumm[1]. This took place immediately after the Prophet's demise on Safar 28, 11 A.H./May 28, 632 A.D. (By the way, like all lunar Hijri years, the solar calendar year 632 of the Christian Era coincided with both the 10th and the 11th Hijri years.)

Imam Ali (ع) did not receive any significant recognition during the reign of the first three caliphs, and even his wife's property, Fadak, was confiscated; thus, his family was deprived of a good source of income. Abu Bakr ordered the confiscation in 632 A.D. The only just and fair Umayyad ruler, namely the last one, Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz, returned Fadak to Fatima's offspring in 718 A.D., 86 years after its confiscation with profound apologies. When Ali (ع) was elected as caliph in 36 A.H./657 A.D., tribalism and racism were as rampant as they used to be during the pre-Islamic era. Islam's teachings were either forgotten or distorted. In Syria, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan had declared himself "caliph" and was buying people's conscience and loyalty. He was, once more, raising one army after another to fight Ali (ع) just as his father Abu Sufyan had raised one army after another to fight Muhammed (ص), causing tens of thousands of Muslims to be killed in the process. Most of Ali's time was spent in defending law and order; he hardly had time to rest and to improve the conditions which he knew were in need of improvement because of the injustices of past regimes that did not protect the Islamic creed from liars and fabricators of traditions, indirectly assisting in the distortion of the Sunnah.

Caliph Ali (ع) had to fight the Battle of Jamal (Camel), which broke out at the end of Rab'i II 36 A.H./June 28, 632 A.D., the forces of dissent which had been herded and led by Aisha daughter of the same Abu Bakr mentioned above and one of the Prophet's wives. She was

1 For complete details of the historical incident known as "Ghadir Khumm," refer to my book titled *Ghadir Khumm: Where Islam was Perfected*.

then nineteen years old and was riding a huge camel named Askar, hence the name of the battle: Harb al-Jamal, battle of the camel. She kept urging her men to fight Ali (ع) and his men. It was the first time that Muslims killed Muslims, and such killing has been going on ever since. Look at Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq and Iran (during the 1980s when more than a million Muslim lives were lost), and remember the civil wars in Lebanon, Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere... History repeats itself. Those who do not learn from the mistakes of past generations are doomed, condemned and destined to repeat them, rest assured. Aisha accused Ali (ع) of having collaborated with those who had killed her Umayyad relative Uthman ibn Affan who became caliph in 24 A.H./645 A.D. and ruled till he was killed in 35 A.H./656 A.D. when he was 89. Ali (ع), in fact, had sent both of his sons, Imam al-Hasan (ع) and Imam al-Husain (ع) (the latter being the hero of this brief report), to defend Uthman who was placed by the angry protesters under virtual house arrest and his mansion was twice subjected to a siege. Water and food supplies were blocked from reaching him. Ali (ع) used to get water and food smuggled to Uthman's mansion during the night passed on from one person to another from one flat rooftop to another till they reached Uthman's mansion. The public outrage stemmed from Uthman's mismanagement of public funds and preference of his own relatives over all others for top government jobs even when such relatives were not fit at all to occupy any government post. He himself lived in luxury unseen before, getting mansions built for him and for his wife, and silk clothes and exotic perfumes were being imported especially for him and for her. His wife, Na'ila daughter of al-Qarafisah, used to wear so much jewelry that people could hear the jingle from a distance! Such should not be the conduct of successors of Prophets. While defending Uthman, Imam al-Hasan (ع) received a wound on his forehead. But the huge number of the angry crowd finally assaulted Uthman's mansion and dealt him blows with their swords, killing him instantly. It was the first time Muslims killed their caliph. Na'ila tried to defend her husband with her bare hands, getting four of her fingers cut off. She sent those fingers together with the copy of the Holy Qur'an which Uthman was reciting when he was killed and which was stained with his blood to Mu'awiyah in Damascus to use them to excite people and to urge them to seek revenge for Uthman's murder.

Aisha, ironically, was one of those who had urged the Muslims to kill Uthman, making her historic statement which we would like to quote here in its original Arabic text verbatim: **أقتلوا نعثلا فقد كفر** "Uqtulu Nathal faqad Kufar," that is, "Kill Nathal, for he has committed apostasy." Nathal was a contemporary Jew famous for his untidy and too long beard; hence, Aisha was comparing Uthman with a Jew. She, in fact, was trying to get either Talhah ibn Ubaydullah, her cousin who aspired to marry her after the demise of the Prophet (ص), something which Islam prohibited, or az-Zubair ibn al-Awwam, son of her older sister Asma' daughter of Abu Bakr, become caliph instead of Ali (ع). Al-Zubair ibn al-Awwam did, in fact, succeed in declaring himself as the caliph after rebelling against the Umayyads as the reader will come to know in the chapter dealing with the Harra incident. Aisha disliked Ali (ع) very much despite all the praise lavished on him by her husband, the Messenger of Allah (ع), and although he did not do anything to warrant such an attitude.

There is no room here to detail all the grievances the Muslims raised against their caliph, Uthman, in addition to the above, for these would fill an entire volume, and books have, in fact, been already written about this subject. One such book is titled **الفتنة الكبرى** *Al-Fitnatul-Kubra* (the greatest dissension) by the renown Egyptian scholar Dr. Taha Husain (winner of a Nobel prize for literature) and published in Cairo, Egypt, a book which the author may have modelled after at-Tabari's book bearing the exact title and dealing with the same theme. One of the best references written about the Battle of the Camel is al-Mas'udi's famous book **مـروج الـذهب** *Muraj al-Thahab*. Ali (ع) won the battle; 13,000 men from aisha's camp and 5,000 from Ali's were killed, according to p. 177, Vol. 5, of *Muraj al-Thahab*. The heaviest casualty was the loss of thousands who knew the entire text of the Holy Qur'an by heart and whose knowledge, during that critical time, was crucial. The Prophet of Islam has said: **موت العالم موت العالم** "Mawt al-aalim mawt al-aalam," that is, "The death of a scholar spells the death of the world." What is the world without scholars? It is darkness without light, trees without fruit, river without water... Islam very much encourages scholarship and reveres scholars, writers, intellectuals, researchers, scientists, etc.

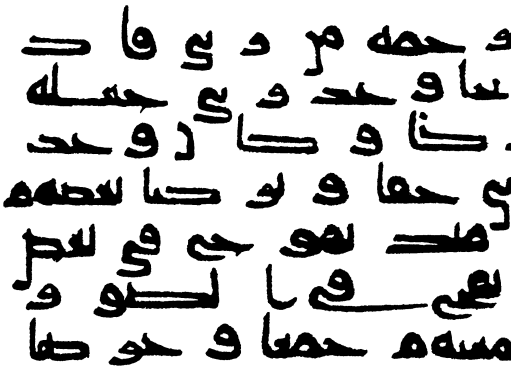
After the Battle of Camel, Ali (ع) had to fight the Battle of Siffeen (40 A.H./661 A.D.) against the army of Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, Yazid's father. Shortly after that, and in the same year, and to be exact on the 19th of the month of Ramadan, 40 A.H./January 29, 661 A.D., Ali (ع) was killed by Ibn Muljim al-Muradi, one of the Kharijites, those who were fed-up with certain Muslim caliphs and with some of the latter's un-Islamic practices. These Kharijites had been crushed by Ali (ع) in the Battle of Nahrawan, which started on Safar 6, 38 A.H./July 17, 658 A.D., but their remnants scattered thereafter throughout the Islamic lands. When he was killed, Ali (ع) was leading the morning prayers at Kufa's grand mosque. Ali (ع) was the embodiment of everything Islam stands for. Even his name, Ali (ع), is derived from "Al-Aliyy," one of the Amighty's ninety-nine Attributes known as Asma' Allah al-Husna, Allah's most beautiful names. Scholars of tafsir, exegesis of the Holy Qur'an, have identified numerous Qur'anic verses praising Ali (ع) and his family, his Ahl al-Bayt **أهل البيت**. The most widely known of such verses is No. 33 of Chapter 33 of the Holy Qur'an (Ayat al-Tathir, Surat al-Ahzab).
This much should suffice the reader to form an idea about Imam al-Husain's father, so let us now discuss the hero of our story.

IMAM HUSAIN SON OF IMAM ALI (ع)

Imam al-Husain (ع), the Master of Martyrs and the hero of this brief history review, was the greatest spiritual leader of his time in the entire world of Islam. He was an Imam, the brother of an Imam, and the son of an Imam. None in history ever enjoyed such merits. All religious authorities admitted his moral, spiritual and religious superiority over everyone else. They admitted that if there was an individual fit for the spiritual and religious vicegerency of the Holy prophet of Islam (ع), Imam al-Husain (ع) was the person best suited for it. Imam al-Husain (ع) was born in Medina on the 15th of the month of Ramadan, 3 A.H./March 1, 625 A.D. and was named " al-Husain" which means "Junior al-Hasan," since his older brother is named " al-Hasan." Ali (ع) chose to name both his sons after Shabar and Shubayr, sons of prophet Aaron, older brother of Prophet Moses, peace be with both of them. Even during his childhood, Imam al-Husain (ع) was known for his brilliance, piety, and lofty upbringing. His grandfather, the Prophet of

Islam, surrounded him with his affection and taught him a great deal, making him the custodian of Allah's knowledge, and so did Imam al-Husain's mother, Fatima (ع), the Head of all the Women of the World, and so did his father Imam Ali (ع) whom the Prophet (ص) took as a "brother" when he joined the Ansar and the Muhajiran with the bond of brotherhood following his historic migration from Mecca to Medina. The Prophet (ص), who never uttered a word out of favoritism or in response to an emotional outburst, called Imam al-Husain (ع) and his older brother Imam al-Hasan (ع) "Masters of the Youths of Paradise;" all the residents of Paradise are young.

Imam al-Husain's life and status in the Islamic history are formidable. Fatima (ع), his mother, was the dearest daughter of her father (ع). Al-Tirmithi cited Usamah ibn Zaid ibn Harithah (referred to above) saying that the Prophet (ص) had said, "The dearest member of my family to me is Fatima." She was declared by the Prophet as the Head of all the Women of the world. She and her husband were members of the family who were distinguished for their qualities and services to Islam. They are role models for all Muslim men and women. Their role was an extension of the Prophet's role in leading the great cultural transformation from the darkness of an infidel culture to the light of Islam, the beacon of guidance and the guarantor of happiness in this life and in the one to come.



Page of the Holy Qur'an handwritten by Imam Husain (ع)

Historians recorded the birth of Imam al-Husain (ع) as an exciting event for the Muslims of Medina and especially for the Prophet of Allah (ع). The Muslims congratulated each other for the new child whom the Prophet considered as his own son. The Prophet once declared, "Husain is of me, and I am of Husain. O Allah! Be pleased with whoever pleases al-Husain!" This testimony was not accidental, nor was it the result of emotional expressions. This declaration came from a responsible wise leader, the Prophet of Allah, who would never commit a mistake during the performance of his Prophetic mission. It is easy to understand the first part of this weighty statement: " al-Husain is of me," for surely Imam al-Husain (ع) was of the Prophet's own lineage through his daughter Fatima.(ع). But what about the other half, that of "and I am of al-Husain"? How could the grandfather be of his grandson? If you consider this statement in the light of the role Imam al-Husain (ع) played in Islam's history, you will understand what the Prophet meant. He simply meant to say, "And my Message is to be continued through al-Husain's martyrdom." The Prophet, in this statement, was delivering an important message and foretelling people of who would act as the fountainheads of Islamic guidance and who would guard his divine message in the future. Emotions and sentiments are not loose in a

Muslim's life but are controlled by Islamic concepts and principles. There is always a criterion for "like" and "dislike" which evolves from the deeply rooted Islamic concepts. Although Abu Lahab was an uncle of the Prophet (ص), his infidelity made him cursed till the Day of Judgment. The same applied to another uncle, Abu Jahal. The Prophet of Allah made another statement which leaves no doubt about Imam Imam al-Hasan's and Imam al-Husain's roles. As indicated above, he (ع) said, " al-Hasan and al-Husain are the masters of the youths of Paradise." This was presented as a credential to the Muslim nation so that it would uphold their leadership.

At a certain time, the Muslims in Medina realized and appreciated the Islamic message's glory and sweet tasting fruits, so they intended to reward the Prophet (ص) for his efforts in guiding them out of the darkness of jahiliyya and into the light of Islam. The gift they presented to the Prophet (ص) was some gold which they had collected. The Prophet's answer came not from him personally but, rather, from his Lord on his behalf in the text of the following Qur'anic verses which were revealed during this very incident:

Say (O Muhammed !): "No reward do I ask you for this (conveying of the Message) except that you be kind to those of my kin." (Qur'an, 23:42)

Muhammed Jawad Maghniyyah, author of **تفسير الكاشف** *Tafsir al-Kashif*[1], narrates saying that when this verse was revealed, people asked the Prophet (ص), "O Messenger of Allah! Who are these of your kin for whom respect is made obligatory on us by this verse?" The Prophet (ص) answered, "They are Ali, Fatima, and their two sons." However, this did not imply disrespect for other members of his kinsfolk or companions. Looking objectively at the message of this verse, it will indicate to you, first of all, reluctance to accept material rewards. If a reward is not suitable, it cannot, and it must not, be accepted. Hence, the verse was enjoining respect for specific people, not because they are only the Prophet's relatives. But the real reason behind this respect

1 The fourth edition of this famous 7-volume *tafsir* adorns our library and it was published in Beirut, Lebanon, in Thul-Qida 1410 A.H./June 1990 A.D. by Dar al-Ilm lil Malayeen (P.O. Box 1085, Beirut, Lebanon).

was to safeguard the Islamic message. The role these holy personalities played in the Islamic history required such respect in order to enable them to perform their duties.

Al-Hakim quoted Au Sa'd al-Khudri saying that the Prophet (ص) once said, "One who dislikes us, we Ahl al-Bayt (family of Prophet Muhammed [a]), Allah shall hurl him into the fire of Hell." This implies that those who dislike the Islamic conduct and way of life as personified by these individuals, through their exemplary conduct, shall receive the Almighty's condemnation and shall taste of His torment.

Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari[1], a maternal relative and one of the greatest of all companions of Prophet Muhammed (ص), narrated once saying that in a speech delivered immediately following the performance of his last pilgrimage, the Farewell Pilgrimage referred to above, the Prophet (ص) said, "O people! I am leaving among you the Book of Allah and my Itrat (Progeny) for your guidance. So long as you hold fast to them both (at the same time), surely you will never stray." This tradition was narrated not only by Jabir but also by at least twenty other eyewitnesses who heard it in person and who participated in that same pilgrimage, and their statements are recorded in numerous references. Such statements were transmitted by chains of trusted narrators of hadith. In his renown book Sahih, Muslim cites some of them. In another tradition transmitted by Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, the Prophet (ص) is quoted as saying, "O people! Let my family act among you like the head of the body, and like the eyes of the head among you." These traditions are impressive in many respects. First, they were narrated by different sources of different inclinations; this adds to their credibility. Second, the same content indicates their consistency, underscoring their authenticity.

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1 Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari is a maternal relative and one of the greatest *sahabis* of Prophet Muhammed **(ع)**, a first-class traditionist and a most zealous supporter of ImamAli ibn Abu Talib (ع). When the Prophet (ص) migrated from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D., he was hosted by Jabir for one week. According to *Al-Istiab*, Jabir died at the age of 94 in 74 A.H./693 A.D. (some say in 77 and others in 78 A.H./696 or 697 A.D. respectively), and his funeral prayers were led by Aban ibn Uthman, then governor of Medina. He was the very last to die from among the Prophet's closest companions.

Imam al-Husain (ع) was one member of the family of the Prophet (ص). He was brought up in the Prophetic guidance where he received the direct attention of the Prophet (ص). The ideal atmosphere where he had grown up with his grandfather, father, mother, and elder brother, was the highest level ever attained. Thus, he acquired wisdom and learned generosity, bravery, piety while attaining the highest knowledge. He occupied outstanding posts during his father's caliphate. During the terror and corruption which swept the Muslim world at the hands of the Umayyad dynasty that ruled the Islamic world (from 661 - 750 A.D.) with an iron fist, he was the sole hope of the Muslims to restore the Islamic laws and to thus bring them prosperity, peace, and happiness in both worlds.

Having seen how his older brother Imam al-Hasan (ع) was betrayed by his friends and poisoned by his foes, Imam al-Husain (ع) remained in seclusion from the public for ten years, feeling helpless against the tide of Umayyad corruption and tyranny. Gradually, people realized that none could save them from such tyranny except Imam al-Husain (ع) himself, so they kept appealing to him to lead them against the Umayyads, and he kept ignoring their pleas due to his knowledge that he could not rely on them to remain steadfast on the battlefield against Mu'awiyah's mighty Syrian army, being convinced that they would betray him just as they had betrayed his older brother and his father. They did exactly so as you will see...

Most of the pleas came from the people of Kufa, Iraq, mostly Shi'as who were subjected to untold atrocities by Kufa's then governor (appointed on behalf of the central Umayyad government in Damascus) Muhammed ibn al-Ash'ath and the top men who supported him and his Umayyad superiors, namely Shurayh, Kufa's judge, a typical preacher of the rulers, by the rulers, and for the rulers, a man who was issuing verdicts according not to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah but to please the Umayyads who were paying his salary and showering him and his likes with gifts from time to time, and Omer ibn Sa'd. The letters those Kufians sent to Imam al-Husain (ع) numbered ten to twelve thousand, and many of them threatened Imam al-Husain (ع) of questioning him before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment as

to: "Why did you not respond to the people who sought your assistance to put an end to tyranny and oppression?" Imam al-Husain (ع) had to oblige despite all the odds against him. He, in fact, knew fully well that he was marching to his death, having already been informed of his martyrdom in the land of Kerbala' by none other than his holy grandfather who even named his killer. He was informed of his women and children taken captive and of the time and day when he would be martyred. Everything was already decreed, and Imam al-Husain (ع) had no choice except to fulfil a decree by sacrificing himself and all the dear ones with him for the sake of Islam. We only wish here to unveil the startling aspects of the revolution's message which is often neglected in its traditional commemoration.

Confronting all the details of this momentous event, we have to answer many pressing questions such as: Why did this revolution take place? What were its implications and procedures? And what were its conclusive results? The answers may provide a guiding light so that we may form our conclusions. The following account is based on the most popular and trustworthy authorities on the subject.

To understand Imam al-Husain's personality and the collective culture of the society, a summary of Islam's view of life is necessary.

ISLAM'S MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

Islam is a way of life. It gives reasons and sets a purpose for living. We were not placed on earth by accident or without a purpose. Everything in life has a purpose; every being has a role to play; every inanimate object serves an end. Islam elevates the spirit while satisfying the material needs...

Islam considers man as God's vicegerent on earth. This status is a lofty and weighty one, but it is also critical: the requirements must be met, the conditions must be satisfied; the mission must be accomplished. Thus, man is in an envied position and, consequently, his acts and norms of conduct are expected to conform with the high level he is to occupy.

The Islamic concepts and laws are inseparable parts of the Islamic

ideology; milk is inseparable from water. They make up the practical expression of Islam in society and in life as a whole. These concepts and laws are essentially to harmonize people's relationships with each other, with other beings, with nature and the environment and, above all, with the Creator.

The basic Islamic outlook of this life is one of an introductory course; the real life is the one to come, not this one. This worldly life is a prelude to another eternal one; therefore, this world is a preparatory stage for people in order to attain the spiritual level which permits them to enter Paradise. It is a microcosm of the real eternal macrocosm. The other side of the picture is the horror of Hell for people who misuse or abuse the power placed at their disposal. Hence, success and failure are not measured by the known criteria of this world, by, say, materialistic supremacy, wealth and power. The Islamic criteria differ from the materialistic ones; they account for the life hereafter; they take into consideration the next phase of our existence. Death is not the end of everything; it is the beginning of real life. To die is to wake up from a brief dream. To please Allah is the sublime goal which surpasses all other wishes and desires, or so should it be. This by no account means that we should neglect acquiring materialistic supremacy, wealth and riches, by legitimate means; it only means that we must put such supremacy, or such wealth, in its rightful place: to serve man and to please Allah. What a noble concept! It is with pleasing Allah and with His support that Muslims seek materialistic supremacy. Alas! The Muslims now do not have any materialistic supremacy at all. Their natural resources are being sold for less than it costs to produce them; their countries are supermarkets for goods manufactured by those who despise them and look down upon them; their leaders can hardly agree on one common cause, and their nations have no say about who should rule them and who should not, and they are robbed of their freedom of expression, worship, and movement. Turkey, for example, used to be the center of the Islamic world and the source of its pride and glory. Now its ruling juntas, supported by non-Muslim and anti-Islamic "superpowers," by Zionists and imperialists, are fighting Islam with all their might and means. The same can be said about the rulers of many other countries who are Muslims only in name. The Muslims are now prisoners in their own homes. They are the underdogs of the world.

Gone are the days of their supremacy and glory and shall never return unless and until they regret and return to their creed and practice it as it should be.

ORIGINS OF DEVIATION

How did Mu'awiyah ascend to the post of ruler of the Muslims, and how did he dare to claim succession to the Prophet (ص), the irreligious, liar, cheating, cunning and conniving man that he was? What happened to the Muslim world? Why was it silent at seeing the assumption of power by an ignoble person like Yazid? Indeed, it is astonishing to witness the indifference and irresponsibility demonstrated by the vast majority of Muslims. One is tempted to say that such indifference is present even in our own time. Our time, in fact, can best be described as the neo-jahiliyya. There are already too many Yazids but no al-Husain to come to the rescue. Islamic values and ideals were as if totally alien to the society. What happened to the dynamic forces that had awakened the world and shaken it like never before? The Prophet's voice had not yet died away regarding the responsibility of the Muslims. He once said, "One who sees a cruel governor violating Allah's laws, breaking His covenant, acting in contrast to the tradition of the Prophet, committing mischief and intruding upon peoples' rights, without trying to change that governor through his action, or speech, Allah will then reserve a suitable place for him in Hell."

We all may wonder about the causes of deviation which led to this deplorable state of affairs. We know for sure that Islam is a perfect and practical religion, a complete way of life. Islam, no doubt, assured us of guiding us to a secure and prosperous life. The question of deficiency in the Islamic message, however, if there is such deficiency at all, or in the way it was conducted by the Prophet (ص), has no place here. The only possible shortcomings, therefore, are confined to the subsequent status of the Muslims, to their way of handling their affairs, and to their conformity to the Islamic laws besides the "natural" obstacles encountered in the sequence of events. Following is the major cause that contributed to the deplorable status quo of the Muslims of the time and is still contributing to that of our own and will continue to do so till the end of time.

FALSIFICATION OF HADITH **AND DISTORTION OF THE**

SUNNA

The worst mischief upon which Mu'awiyah embarked was the fabrication of hadith, traditions detailing what the Prophet of Islam (ع) said or did. Hadith is one of the two sources of Islam's legislative system, the Sharaa. Selecting Imam Ali (ع) as his lifetime's adversary, Mu'awiyah soon found out that his cause was hopeless. Ali's merits were very well recognized by every Muslim while Mu'awiyah's family and dismal conduct were the objects of their contempt. Mu'awiyah's past record was dark and shameful whereas that of Ali (ع) was glorious and shining, full of heroism in defense of Islam.

In order to sustain his campaign and raise the status of his likes, Mu'awiyah had to attract the remnant of some companions of the Prophet (ص) whose characters were known as weak and who had a genuine interest in this world and in its vanishing riches. He employed them to fabricate traditions custom-designed to his own tailoring. This trend of fabricating hadith constituted a grave danger to the integrity of the Islamic tenets. Hadith is second in importance to the Holy Qur'an. It was very important to ward off such a danger. To expose such a trend to the Muslims at large was very vital, pivotal, of the highest priority. It would be accomplished by exposing and disgracing those who embarked upon committing and nurturing such a terrible mischief. Imam al-Husain's revolution broke out in order to undertake this very task.

Let us now review a few samples of fabricated traditions[1].

Abu Hurayra is supposed to have quoted the Prophet (ص) saying, "Allah has trusted three persons for His revelation: Myself, Gabriel and Mu'awiyah." We wonder what Allah was doing for the revelation when Mu'awiyah was in the camp of the infidels. Abu Hurayra claimed the Prophet (ص) gave Mu'awiyah an arrow then said to him, "Take this arrow until we meet in Paradise." What a lucky arrow to enter Paradise! Let us stop here to discuss this man, Abu Hurayra, who may have had

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1 For more information about this man, Abu Hurayra, refer to *Shi'as are the Ahl al-Sunnah*, a book written in Arabic by Dr. Muhammed al-Tijani al-Samawi and translated into English by myself. It is available for sale (for $18.95) from Vantage Press, Inc., 516 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001, or you may order it through the Internet's worldwide web: www.amazon.com. Its title in the said web is "Shi'as are the Ahl al-Sunnah."

the lion's share in distorting the Prophet's Sunnah especially when we come to know that he was quoted by a host of tabian who in turn are quoted by hundreds others who in turn are quoted by thousands..., and so on. This is why his name is in the forefront of narrators of hadith.

There is no agreement about what Abu Hurayra's name was, nor when he was born or when he died. He is said as having died in 59 A.H./678 A.D., and some say that his name was Abdul-Rahman ibn Sakhr al-Azdi, while others say it was Umair ibn amir ibn Abd Thish-Shari ibn Taraf. But it is agreed upon that he belonged to the Yemenite tribe of Daws ibn Adnan and that his mother's name was Umaima daughter of Safeeh ibn al-Harith ibn Shabi ibn Abu Sa'd; she, too, belonged to the Daws tribe. It is said that the Prophet (ص) nicknamed him "Abu Hurayra" after a kitten to which he was attached. He accepted Islam in 7 A.H./628-9 A.D. immediately after the Battle of Khaybar, and he was then more than thirty years old. He was one of those indigent Muslims who had no house to live in, so they were lodged at the Suffa, a row of rooms adjacent to the Prophet's mosque at Medina. These residents used to receive the charity doled out to them by other Muslims. He used to see the Prophet (ص) mostly when it was time to eat. He missed most of the battles in defense of Islam waged after that date although he was young and healthy and capable of serving in the army.

The time Abu Hurayra spent in the company of the Prophet (ص), that is to say, on and off, is by the most generous estimates three years, yet this man narrated more traditions of the Prophet (ص) than anyone else in history. The total number of "traditions" which he attributed to the Prophet (ص) reached the astronomical figure of 5,374 of which only 326 are quoted by al-Bukhari, the most famous compiler of hadith, and who endorses no more than 93 of them! Muslim, another compiler of hadith, endorses only 89 of Abu Hurairay's alleged ahadith. These facts and figures are stated in the famous classic reference titled Siyar Alam al-Nubala' by al-Thahbi. Compare this unrealistic figure of 5,374 "traditions" attributed to the Prophet (ص) and compiled during less than three years with the 586 traditions compiled by Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law who was raised by the Prophet (ص) since his birth in 600 A.D. and who followed the Prophet (ص) like his shadow for 32 years. Compare it with the figure of 142 traditions narrated by Abu Bakr, one of the closest companions and a longtime friend of the Prophet (ص) and one of the earliest to embrace Islam.

Compare it with the figure of 537 traditions narrated by the second caliph Omer ibn al-Khattab and with the 146 traditions narrated by Uthman ibn Affan, keeping in mind that all these men knew how to read and write whereas Abu Hurayra was illiterate; he could neither read nor write...

The Umayyads found in Abu Hurayra the right man to fabricate as many "traditions" as they needed to support their un-Islamic practices and then attribute them to the Prophet (ص), hence the existence of such a huge number of traditions filling the books of the Sunnah. And the Umayyads rewarded Abu Hurayra very generously. When he came from Yemen to Hijaz, Abu Hurayra had only one single piece of striped cloth to cover his private parts. When Mu'awiyah employed Abu Hurayra to work in the factories producing custom-designed "traditions," he rewarded him by appointing him as the governor of Medina. He also married him off to a lady of prestige for whom Abu Hurayra used to work as a servant and built him al-Aqeeq mansion. Abu Hurayra found himself during the Umayyads' reign of terror and oppression a man of wealth and influence, owning slaves and having servants. Prior to that, Omer ibn al-Khattab appointed him as governor of Bahrain for about two years during which Abu Hurayra amassed a huge wealth, so much so that people complained about him to Omer who called him to account for it. Finding his excuse too petty to accept, Omer deposed him. Omer also questioned him about the unrealistically abundant traditions which he was attributing to the Prophet (ص), hitting him with his cane and reprimanding him for forging traditions and even threatening to expel him from the Muslim lands. All these details and more can be reviewed in famous references such as: Al-Riyad al-Nadira **الرياض النضرة** by at-Tabari, in Vol. 4 of the original Arabic text of al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, where the author quotes Abu Hurayra talking about himself, in Abu Hurayra by the Egyptian scholar Mahmoud Abu Rayyah, in **سير أعلام النبلاء** *Siyar Alam al-Nubala'* by al-Thahbi, in **شرح نهج البلاغة** *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha* by Ibn Abul-Hadad, in **البداية و النهاية** *Al-Bidaya wal Nihaya* by Ibn Katheer, in **طبقات الفقهاء** *Tabaqat al-Fuqaha* by Ibn Sa'd (also famous as Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd), in **تأريخ الأمم و الملوك** *Tarikh al-Umam wal Muluk* by at-Tabari, in **تاريخ الخلفاء** *Tarikh al-Khulafa* by al-Sayyuti, in **فتح الباري** *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in **المستدرك** *Al-Mustadrak* by al-Hakim, and in numerous other references. Yet some Muslims label Abu Hurayra as "Islam's narrator,"

propagating for his fabrications without first studying them in the light of the Qur'an and going as far as invoking the Almighty to be pleased with him....

Abdullah ibn Omer (ibn al-Khattab), too, claimed that the Prophet said, "You will see greed after me and things with which you will disagree." People, he went on, asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What do you order us to do then?" The Prophet, Abdullah continued, said, "Give the governor what is his and plead to Allah for yours." Islam, true Islam, never condones toleration of unjust rulers. Another fabricated tradition is also by Abdullah ibn Omer who quoted the Prophet (ص) saying, "Put up with whatever conduct you do not like of your rulers because if you abandon the **جماعة** Jamaa (group) even the distance of one foot and then die, you will die as unbelievers." Surely many despots ruling the Muslim world nowadays can appreciate such "traditions" and will not hesitate to publicize for them and be generous to those who promote them; they would give them generous salaries and build them mansions... Such fabricated "traditions" are not only in total contrast with the Qur'an and the Sunnah as well as with other verified traditions, they invite the Muslims to be the slaves of their rulers. This is exactly what Mu'awiyah wanted, and this is exactly what so-called "Muslim" rulers like him want in our day and time... Unfortunately for the Muslims and fortunately for their enemies, there are quite a few "Muslim" rulers like this Mu'awiyah. This is why there is poverty, ignorance, dictatorship, injustice, oppression and subjugation to the enemies of Islam throughout the Muslim world nowadays.

YAZID APPOINTED AS SUPREME RULER

Yazid's grandfather, Abu Sufyan, advised and managed the infidel's campaigns against Islam till the conquest of Mecca, as stated above. His wife Hind (mother of Mu'awiyah and grandmother of Yazid) tried to chew the liver of Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet (ص), because of her burning hatred and cannibalism. Mu'awiyah, too, was an active opponent of Islam. Indeed, Abu Sufyan's family was performing the strategic, financial and morale boosting in the infidel's campaign against the Muslims for many years. Their efforts, wealth and diplomacy formed a great obstacle in the way of spreading Islam.

Time had lapsed and Mecca was suddenly besieged with the considerably large forces of the Muslims. The unbelievers in Mecca were stunned at seeing the Muslim fighters who had caught them by surprise, thanks to the shrewd military tactics of the Prophet (ص). Thus, the infidels, including Abu Sufyan, had no choice except to abandon their arrogance and to accept Allah's sovereignty, or so did most of them pretend. Mu'awiyah was then 28 years old. Having seen how his father "accepted" Islam, though reluctantly, he fled for Bahrain where he wrote his father a very nasty letter reprimanding him for his "conversion." It is not clear when Mu'awiyah brought himself to profess adherence to the Islamic creed. During this incident, i.e. the fall of Mecca to the Muslims, which was accomplished on a Friday, the 20th of the month of Ramadan, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 14, 630 A.D., less than two years before the Prophet's demise, historians recorded some peculiar stories about Abu Sufyan's family; however, there is one thing certain: They accepted Islam unwillingly, and they were treated in a special way on that account. For instance, they were given more than their share of the treasury in order to gain their hearts and win them over to Islam. But whether this generosity had any effect in producing any change at all in their attitude is quite another story. Indeed, subsequent events revealed the fact that no change at all had taken place in their way of thinking.

Yazid was brought up in such a family whose atmosphere was electrified with emotions of its dead who fought Islam and who were killed mostly during Islam's first major battle, that of Badr which broke out on a Friday, the 17th of the month of Ramadan, 2 A.H., corresponding to March 16, 624 A.D. and to which the Holy Qur'an refers in 8:5-11. Seventy prominent pagan Quraishites were killed in it, half of them at the hands of Imam al-Husain's father Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). That, by the way, was Ali's first battle; he was 24 years old. Among the Umayyads who were killed in it were: Utbah, father-in-law of Yazid's father Mu'awiyah, Utbah's son al-Walid ibn al-Mugharah (father of the famous military leader Khalid ibn al-Walid), and Shaybah, Utbah's brother. Al-Walid ibn al-Mugharah is cursed in the Holy Qur'an in 74:11-30 (Surat al-Muddaththir). Utbah is father of Hind, mother of Yazid, who tried to chew the liver of Hamzah, Prophet Muhammed (ص)'s dear uncle and valiant defender of Islam. Add to

this the fact that such family witnessed how those who had killed their kinsfolk received full honour, recognition, and respect by the entire community, not to mention the wasted wealth, the injured pride, and the loss of privileges which they used to enjoy during the pre-Islamic period known as the jahiliyya. Yet Yazid himself had some unique characteristics in the negative and adverse sense of the word in addition to what we recorded above. He was known as a playboy; he is on record as the first person ever to compose pornographic poetry. He described each and every part of his aunt's body for sensual excitement, doing so without being reprimanded by his father or mother or anyone else. Historians record his being seen drunk in public, his committing adultery, and his leading quite a corrupt life, a life which did not last for long, thank Allah. In one of his poetic verses, Yazid stated, "The family of Hashim (the Prophet's clansmen) staged a play to get a kingdom. Actually, there was neither news from Allah (wahi) received nor a revelation."

Mu'awiyah was not ruling as an individual but was representing a way of thinking which differed in nature from everything Islam stands for. However, he was not satisfied to leave the ruling stage without making sure that it was properly looked after. His pragmatic and materialistic mind drove him to prepare for the crowning of his son, Yazid, as his successor. Mu'awiyah had made many pledges not to install Yazid when he saw the conditions at the time not conducive to such a plan because Muslims were still politically conscious and desired to see the restoration of the Islamic laws and values. Mu'awiyah, hence, had a difficult job at hand before leaving this world. He, in fact, tried his best to buy the allegiance for his son from his army's commanders, tribal chiefs and chieftains, and entire tribes as well as men of distinction and influence, spending huge sums of money in the process. But his efforts did not succeed with everyone.

One of his failed attempts was when he wrote Imam al-Husain (ع) soliciting his endorsement for his appointment of Yazid as the heir apparent to the throne. Imam al-Husain's answer was a scathing criticism of all what Mu'awiyah and Yazid had committed. Mu'awiyah, therefore, forewarned his son Yazid to beware of Imam al-Husain (ع).
Yazid eventually succeeded his father Mu'awiyah as the ruler. Yazid

now spared no means to secure the submission for his unholy practices, oppression and aggression, from everyone. He knew very well that in reality, he had no legitimate right whatsoever to make claims or to issue demands. On the contrary, he was guilty of having committed many illegal and sacrilegious deeds for which he should have been killed, had there anyone powerful enough to implement the Islamic code of justice. Once in charge, Yazid took his father's advice regarding Imam al-Husain (ع) seriously. He wrote the then governor of Medina, al-Walid ibn Utbah, ordering him to secure the oath of allegiance to him as the new ruler from everyone in general and from Imam al-Husain (ع), Abdullah ibn Omer (son of second caliph Omer ibn al-Khattab), and Abdullah ibn az-Zubair in particular, being the most prominent personalities. Yazid in an unmistakable language ordered al-Walid to secure such an oath for him by force if necessary, and that if Imam al-Husain (ع) refused, he should behead him and send his severed head to him in Damascus. But al-Walid's efforts were fruitless. Imam al-Husain's reply was exact and direct; said he, "Ameer (Governor)! I belong to the Ahl al-Bayt (family) of the Prophet. Allah has consigned to and charged us with the Imamate (spiritual and political leadership of the Muslims). Angels pay us visits. Yazid is a wicked sinner, a depraved reprobate, a wanton drunkard, a man who sheds blood unjustly, and a man who openly defies Allah's commandments. A man like me will never yield his allegiance to a person like him."

THE NOBLE MOTIVES BEHIND IMAM HUSAIN'S REVOLUTION

Such motives were numerous. Some of them stemmed from the grievances of the general public, while others were ideological in nature and noble in objective. They may be summed up as follows:

1) The most urgent need was to stop the attempts to distort the Islamic concepts and code of conduct, particularly the falsification of hadith as discussed above. This was of the utmost significance; it preoccupied the minds of responsible Muslims at the time. Such fabrication was quite rampant, epidemic in nature, festered by the funds available for those who rushed to please the Umayyads with their pens, those who did not hesitate to sell their religion for a trifling. Such fabrication was poisonous in effect, and it affected the lives of all Muslims, and it still

does. It was giving the Umayyads a free hand to do whatever they desired of unfair and unethical policies in dealing with their subjects. The mask of religion with which they used to hide their un-Islamic conduct was quite dangerous. In the long run, such danger would eventually change the pristine concepts introduced by Islam and substitute them with anything but Islam. Stripping such a mask and exposing the true picture of the Umayyads was the most urgent task of a revolutionary like Imam al-Husain (ع).

2) The State's structure was built on un-Islamic premises. Quraish was born to rule; non-Arabs were second-class citizens who formed the base of the society's pyramid. That was the general social picture of the Islamic world under the Umayyad's rule. Anyone who dared to express an opinion which did not agree with that of the Umayyads had to be placed under house arrest if not altogether eliminated. His property would then be confiscated and his life would be at stake. He would live in fear for the rest of his miserable life. Nowadays, there are millions of Muslims who live under such conditions. You see, the Umayyads are not dead; they are very much alive and well...

3) The Umayyads considered the Islamic world as their own real estate property. The zakat and other Islamic taxes were levied, but nobody knew where the funds went. Large gifts were doled out from the state treasury (called in Islam bayt al-mal) to governors, government officials, tribal chiefs, army commanders, and officers who surpassed others in their cruelty and oppression... Large sums of money were spent on activities which Islam prohibits: racing, gambling, wines, slave women to entertain the high class and the people in power, etc. The majority of Muslims were left on the brink of starvation while the ruling clique enjoyed the social and material privileges. It very much is like what one sees happening nowadays in many Muslim countries. Let us face it; most Muslims are nowadays the laughing stocks of the world; انا لله و انا اليه راجعون *Inna Lillah wa Inna Ilayhi Rajioon* (We belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return).

4) The Muslims had apparently become accustomed to the un-Islamic rule of the Umayyads as time passed by. Their resistance gradually slackened, and some people began adjusting to the new realities. The

revolutionary spirit of Islam began to disappear little by little from the Muslims' lives and thoughts. A new stimulant to their souls was necessary in order to bring life back to their misled souls and to restore the Islamic conduct and way of life to the society.

THE REVOLUTION'S PROCESS

Having refused to swear the oath of allegiance to Yazid, Imam al-Husain (ع) realized that his stay in Medina was becoming impossible, unsafe; therefore, he decided to bid farewell to it. Bidding his people and friends to get ready for the journey, he went at night to the tomb of his grandfather Prophet Muhammed (ص). Approaching the grave, he greeted him then said, "Assalamo Alaikom, O Messenger of Allah! I am the son of the beloved portion of your heart Fatima. Grandfather! You yourself had bequeathed to our Umma (nation) urging them to look after me and to take care of me, but they have neglected doing so and quite forgotten all of that."

He spent the entire night at the tomb occupied in prayer the entire period, returning after daybreak. He did the same in the following night. One of his prayers in that second night was:

Allah! This is the resting-place of Your beloved Prophet Muhammed (ص) and I am his grandson. You know well the present situation in which I am, and You know what is in the innermost of my heart. I invoke You, Lord, to keep me by the grace of this holy place firmly steadfast in my pursuit of whatever meets Your Pleasure and the Pleasure of Your Prophet.

At-Tabari, Abu Mikhnaf and many other historians record saying that Imam al-Husain (ع) saw his grandfather the Prophet (ص) in his vision at the end of that same second night calling unto him thus:

Come to me, O Husain! Come to me going by and passing through the torturous stage of martyrdom and claim the right position reserved for you. The Lord, Allah, will resurrect me, your parents, your elder brother (al-Hasan) and yourself at the same time and gather us all at the same place on the Day of Judgment.

Umm Salamah, the virtuous wife of Prophet Muhammed (ص), hurried to Imam al-Husain (ع) as soon as she heard that he intended to depart from Medina. She said to him, "Son! How will I be able to bear your journey to Iraq? I have heard your grandfather (the Prophet [a]) saying, My son al-Husain will be murdered on a tract of land people will call Kerbala'.'" "By Allah, mother," Imam al-Husain (ع) answered, adding, "I know all that. I also know on what day I will be murdered, and the name of the man who will murder me. I know, too, the people who will inter my dead body and the members of my Ahl al-Bayt and friends who will meet their martyrdom along with me. If you desire, I will show you the exact spot of my grave." On Rajab 28, 60 A.D./May 7, 680 A.D., Imam al-Husain (ع) left Medina for good accompanied by 21 male children in addition to the ladies.

HUSAIN IN MECCA

When Yazid came to know that al-Walid had allowed Imam al-Husain (ع) and Abdullah ibn az-Zubair to leave Medina for Mecca without taking their oath of allegiance to him, he became very angry and immediately deposed al-Walid from his post and appointed Amr ibn Sa'd in his place. Amr, in turn, appointed Omer ibn az-Zubair as his chief executive officer. Omer began to harass and intimidate the supporters of Abdullah ibn az-Zubair. The Imam (ع) understood that those were scaring tactics meant to convey the message that he would be next to harass and intimidate; therefore, he felt that it was not safe for him to stay even in Mecca. There, Imam al-Husain (ع) received thousands of letters, mostly from the people of Kufa, pleading to him to rescue them from the Umayyads' tyranny. According to the renown writer al-Balathiri, Imam al-Husain (ع) received as many as six hundred letters in one day and a total of twelve thousands, all requesting the same. Among those who wrote him were these renown Kufians some of whom betrayed him then fought him: Shabth ibn Rab'i, Hijar ibn Abjar, Yazid ibn al-Harith, Izrah ibn Qays, Amr ibn al-Hajjaj, and Muhammed ibn Omayr ibn Utarid. First, Imam al-Husain (ع) did not respond to any of these letters, then he wrote one letter which he entrusted to Hani ibn Hani al-Subayi and Sa'd ibn Abdullah al-Hanafi wherein he said,

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful

Hani and Sa'd brought me your letters, and they are the last to deliver such letters to me. I understand what you narrate, and the gist of most of your letters is: "We have no Imam; so, come to us, perhaps Allah will gather us with you on the path of guidance and righteousness." I have sent you my brother and cousin and the confidant of my Ahl al-Bayt and ordered him to write me with regard to your conditions, views and intentions. So, if he writes me saying that your view is united with that of those of distinction and wisdom from among you and in agreement with what your messengers and letters state, I shall, by the Will of Allah, come to you very soon. By my life, an Imam is one who acts upon the Book [of Allah] and implements justice and follows the path of righteousness; he dedicates himself to follow Allah's Commandments, and peace be with you."

He handed his letter to his cousin Muslim ibn Aqeel saying, "I am dispatching you to the people of Kufa, and Allah shall deal with you as He pleases. I wish that I and you should be in the company of the martyrs; so, proceed with Allah's blessing and help. Once you get there, stay with the most trustworthy of its people."

Muslim left Mecca on the fifteenth of the month of Ramadan, corresponding to June 22, 680 A.D., via the Mecca-Medina highway. He reached Medina and went to the Mosque of the Prophet (ص), then he bade his family farewell after having hired two road guides from the tribe of Qays. One night the road guides were lost, and they became extremely thirsty, and it was very hot. They said to Muslim (ع) once they recognized some road marks, "Take yonder road and follow it, perhaps you will be saved." He, therefore, left them, following their advice. Both road guides died of thirst. He could not carry them because they were about to pass away. What those road guides had actually seen was not the road itself but some landmarks leading thereto. The distance between them and water was not known, and they were unable to ride on their own, nor could they ride with someone else. Had Muslim (ع) stayed with them, he, too, would have perished. The most urgent matter was to preserve precious lives and to continue the march till water could be reached, hence his decision to abandon them where they were. Muslim and those serving him barely survived till they reached the highway and the water source where they rested

for a short while.

Muslim sent a letter to Imam al-Husain (ع) with a messenger whom he hired from those who settled near that water source. He told him about the death of the road guides, about the hardship he underwent, and that he was staying at a narrow passage at Batn al-Khabt awaiting his instructions. The messenger met Imam al-Husain (ع) at Mecca and delivered the letter to him. Al-Imam al-Husain (ع) wrote him back ordering him to continue his march to Kufa without any delay. Having read the letter, Muslim immediately resumed his trip and passed by a watering place belonging to the tribe of Tay. He Alighted there then departed. He saw a man shooting and killing a deer, so he took it as a sign of good omen: the killing of his foe.

On the twenty-fifth of Shawwal, 60 A.H./July 27, 680 A.D., Muslim ibn Aqeel entered Kufa and stayed with al-Mukhtar ibn Abu Ubayd al-Thaqafi who was highly respected among his people, a generous man, a man of ambition and daring, one well experienced and determined, and a formidable opponent of the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be with them. He was a man of great discretion especially with regard to the rules of the battle and the means of subduing the foe. He kept company with the Progeny of the most holy Prophet (ص), so he benefitted from their ethics and virtuous morals, and he sought their advice publicly and privately.

MUSLIM SWEARS OATH OF ALLEGIANCE FOR HUSAIN

The Shi'as of Kufa came in groups to meet Muslim as he stayed at al-Mukhtar’s house, pledging to him their obedience. This increased his happiness and elation. When he read to them Imam al-Husain’s letter, Abis ibn Shibeeb al-Shakiri stood and said, "I do not speak on behalf of the people, nor do I know what they conceal in their hearts, nor do I deceive you in their regard. By Allah! I can tell you what I personally have decided to do. By Allah! I shall respond to your call, and I shall fight your enemy. I shall defend you with my sword till I meet Allah desiring nothing except what He has in store for me." Habib ibn Muzahir said, "You have briefly stated your intention, and by Allah, the One and only Allah, I feel exactly as you do." Sa'd ibn Abdullah al-Hanafi made a similar statement. Other Shi'as came to swear the oath

of allegiance to him till his *diwan* counted as many as eighteen thousand men. Some historians say that they were as many as twenty five thousand men. According to al-Shabi, however, the number of those who swore allegiance to him reached forty thousand. It was then that Muslim wrote Imam al-Husain (ع) a letter which he handed to Abis ibn Shibeeb al-Shakiri informing him of the consensus among the people of Kufa to obey him and to wait for his arrival. In it, he said, "A scout does not lie to his people. Eighteen thousand Kufians have already come to me; so, hurry and come here as soon as this letter reaches you." That was twenty-seven days before Muslim's martyrdom. The Kufians, too, added to it their own letter wherein they stated the following: "Hurry and come to us, O son of the Messenger of Allah! A hundred thousand swords are in Kufa on your side; so, do not tarry."

This angered a group of the Umayyads with vested interests. Among them were Omer bin Sa'd, son of the renown Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Rabi'ah al-Hadrami, and Imarah ibn Uqbah ibn Abu Mueet. They wrote Yazid warning him of the arrival of Muslim ibn Aqeel and the rallying of the people of Kufa behind him, adding that al-Numan ibn Basheer, governor of Kufa, was not strong enough to stand in his [Aqeel's] way. Yazid deposed al-Numan ibn Basheer and appointed Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad in his place. The new governor was a man very well known for his ruthfulness. Yazid ordered Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad to rush to Kufa in the company of Muslim ibn Omer al-Bahili, al-Munthir ibn al-Jarad, and Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Nawfal escorted by five hundred soldiers whom he hand-picked from among the people of Basra. Ibn Ziyad rushed to Kufa, paying no attention to anyone who fell off his horse due to exhaustion even if he were one of his own closest friends. For example, when Shurayk ibn al-A'war fell on the way, and even when Abdullah ibn al-Harith fell, thinking that Ibn Ziyad would slow down for their sake, Ibn Ziyad paid no attention to them, fearing that Imam al-Husain (ع) might reach Kufa before him. Whenever he passed by a checkpoint, its guards thought that he was Imam al-Husain (ع), so they said, "Welcome, O son of the Messenger of Allah!" He remained silent till he reached Kufa via the Najaf highway. When he arrived, people welcomed him and said in one voice: "Welcome, O son of the Messenger of Allah!" This only intensified his outrage. He continued his march till he reached the

governor’s mansion. Al-Numan did not open the gate for him, and he spoke to him from the mansion’s roof-top. Said he, "I shall not return the trust to you, O son of the Messenger of Allah!" Ibn Ziyad said to him, "Open the gate, for your night has extended too long!" A man heard his voice and recognized him. He, therefore, said to the people, "He is Ibn Ziyad, by the Lord of the Ka'ba!" They, therefore, opened the gate for him then dispersed, going back home.

In the morning, Ibn Ziyad gathered people at the grand mosque. There, he delivered a speech warning them against mutiny and promising them generous rewards for conforming. Said he, "Anyone found to be sheltering one of those who scheme against the authority of the commander of the faithful [meaning Yazid] and who does not hand him over will be crucified on the door of his own house."

When Muslim ibn Aqeel came to know about Ibn Ziyad's speech and his explicit threats and having come to know about people's conditions, he feared being assassinated. He, therefore, left al-Mukhtar's house after the dark and went to the house of Hani ibn Urwah al-Mathhaji who was a very zealous Shi'a. He was also one of Kufa's dignitaries, one of its qaris of the Holy Qur'an, and the shaikh and chief of the Banu Murad. He could easily raise four thousand troops fully armed and eight thousand cavaliers. If he includes his tribe's allies from Kindah, the number would swell to thirty thousand. He was one of the closest friends of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on whose side he fought in all his three battles. He had seen and was honoured by being a companion of the Prophet (ص). When he was later killed in defense of Imam al-Husain (ع), he was more than ninety years old. Muslim ibn Aqeel stayed at the house of Shareek ibn Abdullah al-A'war al-Harithi al-Hamadani al-Basri, one of the main supporters of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be with him, in Basra. He had participated in the Battle of Siffeen and fought side by side with the great sahabi Ammar ibn Yasir. Due to his distinction and prominence, Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad appointed him as Governor of Kerman on behalf of Mu'awiyah. He used to be in contact with and in the company of Hani ibn Urwah.

The Shi'as kept meeting Muslim ibn Aqeel secretly at Hani's house without attracting the attention of Ibn Ziyad, admonishing each other to keep it to themselves. Ibn Ziyad, therefore, could not know where Muslim was. He called Maqil, his slave, to meet him. He gave him three thousand [dinars] and ordered him to meet the Shi'as and to tell them that he was a Syrian slave of Thul-Kila and that Allah blessed him with loving Ahl al-Bayt of His Messenger (ع), that it came to his knowledge that one of the members of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) had come to that country, and that he had with him some money which he wanted to deliver to him. Maqil entered the grand mosque and saw Muslim ibn Awsajah al-Asadi offering his prayers. Having seen him finish his prayers, he came close to him and made the above claim to him. Muslim ibn Awsajah prayed Allah to grant that man goodness and success. He then accompanied him to the place where Muslim ibn Aqeel was hiding. The spy delivered the money to Muslim and swore the oath of allegiance to him. The money was handed over to Abu

Thumamah al-Saidi who was a far-sighted and a brave Shi'a dignitary appointed by Muslim to receive the funds and to buy thereby weapons. That man kept meeting Muslim every day. No secrets were kept from him, so he kept gathering intelligence and getting it to Ibn Ziyad in the evening.

HANI IBN URWAH

When the matter became clear to Ibn Ziyad, who by now knew that Muslim was hiding at the house of Hani ibn Urwah, he had Asma' ibn Kharijah, Muhammed ibn al-Ash'ath and Amr ibn al-Hajjaj brought to him. He asked them why Hani had not been coming lately to visit him at his governor's mansion. They told him that it was due to his sickness, but he was not convinced especially since his informers had already told him that Hani used to sit at the door of his house every evening. These same men rode to Hani and asked him to meet the sultan, for "He cannot stand you staying away from him," they said, pressuring him till he yielded. Hani, therefore, rode his mule and went. As soon as Ibn Ziyad saw him, he said, "His feet, the feet of the treacherous one, have brought him to you." Then he turned to his judge Shurayh and cited verses about judges who rush to please their tyrannical rulers who appoint them in their positions rather than implement Islam's legislative system, the Sharaa. Ibn Ziyad turned to Hani and said, "You brought Aqeel's son to your house and gathered weapons for him, did you not?" Hani denied, and when their argument intensified, Ibn Ziyad ordered Maqil to be brought to him. Hani, hence, understood that that man was actually Ibn Ziyad's spy, so he said to Ibn Ziyad, "Your father had done me great favors, and I now wish to reward him. Why do you not listen to my good advice and safely depart for Syria with your family and wealth? Someone who is more worthy than you and your friend [meaning Yazid] of taking charge has come here." Ibn Ziyad said, "And under the foam is the pure sour cream."

Ibn Ziyad then said to him, "By Allah! You will not stay out of my sight before you bring him to me." Hani said, "By Allah! Had he been under my foot, I would not have lifted it!" Ibn Ziyad then spoke rudely to him and even threatened to kill him. Hani, therefore, said, "In that case, there will be plenty of swords around you," thinking that the tribesmen of Murad would protect him from Ibn Ziyad who then pulled

Hani’s braids, hitting his face with his sword, breaking his nose and scattering the flesh from his cheeks and forehead on his beard. He then jailed him at his mansion.

Amr ibn al-Hajjaj heard that Hani had been killed. Hani’s wife Raw'a, who is well known as the mother of Yahya son of Hani, was the sister of Amr ibn al-Hajjaj. The latter, therefore, rode with a multitude from the tribe of Mathhaj, and they all surrounded the mansion. When Ibn Ziyad came to know about it, he ordered Shurayh, the judge, to see Hani and then to tell those horsemen that Hani was still alive. Shurayh narrates saying, "When Hani saw me, he said in a loud voice, O Muslims! Should ten persons enter here, you must come to my rescue!’ Had Hameed ibn Abu Bakr al-Ahmari, the policeman, not been with me, I would have conveyed his message, but I had to simply say instead that Hani was still alive. Amr ibn al-Hajjaj then praised Allah and went back accompanied by the other men."

MUSLIM’S UPRISING

When Muslim came to know about what had happened to Hani, he feared being assassinated; therefore, he rushed to rise before the time he had set with the people. He ordered Abdullah ibn Hazim to call upon his men, who had then filled the houses surrounding him, to gather together. Four thousand men assembled. They were shouting Badr’s call which was: "O Supported One! Annihilate them!"

Ubaydullah ibn Amr ibn Aziz al-Kindi was placed in command of the Kindah and Rabi'ah quarters. "March ahead of me," said Muslim, "in command of the cavalry." Muslim ibn Awsajah al-Asadi was placed in command of Mathhaj and Banu Asad. "Take charge of the infantry," Muslim ordered him. Abu Thumamah al-Saidi was placed in charge of Tameem and Hamadan, whereas al-Abbas ibn Jadah al-Jadli was given the command of the Medina troops.

They marched towards the governor’s mansion. Ibn Ziyad fortified himself inside it, locking all its gates. He could not resist because there were only thirty policemen with him and twenty of his close men and slaves. But the substance from which the people of Kufa were made was treachery; so, their standards kept disappearing till no more than

three hundred men remained out of the original four thousand. Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays described them as a whore who demanded a different man every day.

When those inside the mansion called upon the people of Kufa saying, "O Kufians! Fear Allah and do not expose yourselves to Syrian cavaliers whose might you have already tasted and whom you have already tested on the battlefield," the remaining three hundred dispersed, so much so that a man would come to his son, brother, or cousin and tell him to go home, and a wife would cling to her husband till he returned home.

Muslim offered the evening prayers at the [grand Kufa] mosque accompanied by only thirty men. Then, when he went to Kindah's quarters, only three men accompanied him. He hardly proceeded for a short while before finding himself without anyone at all to show him the way. He alighted from his horse and cautiously traversed Kufa's alleys not knowing where to go.

When people abandoned Muslim, their noise died down, and Ibn Ziyad could not hear the voice of any of their men. Ibn Ziyad ordered his bodyguards to inspect the mosque's courtyard to see whether there were any men lying in ambush. They, therefore, kept lowering their lanterns down its walls and lighting reeds then lowering them down with ropes till they reached the mosque's courtyard. They could not see anyone, so they informed Ibn Ziyad who ordered his caller to call people to assemble at the mosque. When they filled the mosque, he ascended the pulpit and said, "Aqeel's son has caused the dissension and disunity with which you all are familiar; so, there is no security henceforth to any man in whose house we find him. Anyone who captures him and brings him to us will be paid his blood money. O servants of Allah! Fear Allah and safeguard your obedience and oath of allegiance, and do not expose yourselves to peril."

Then he ordered al-Haseen ibn Tameem, chief of his police force, to search homes and highways, warning him that he would kill Muslim should he succeed in escaping from Kufa.

Al-Haseen stationed his guards at highway crossroads and pursued the dignitaries who had supported Muslim, arresting Abdul-Ala ibn Yazid al-Kalbi and Imarah ibn Salkhab al-Azdi. He threw them in jail then killed them. Then he jailed a group of prominent leaders as a safeguarding measure against what they might do. Among them were al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah and al-Harith al-A'war al-Hamadani.

AL-MUKHTAR JAILED

When Muslim marched out, al-Mukhtar was at a village called Khatwaniyya. He came accompanied by his supporters raising a green standard while Abdullah ibn al-Harith was raising a red one. Having planted his standard at the door of Amr ibn Hareeth's house, he said, "I want to stop Amr." It became obvious to them that both Muslim and Hani had been killed, and it was suggested to them that they would feel more secure in the company of Amr ibn Hareeth, and so they did. Ibn Hareeth testified that they had both avoided Muslim ibn Aqeel... Ibn Ziyad ordered them jailed after having reviled al-Mukhtar and hit his face with a lance, gouging one of his eyes. They remained in prison till Imam al-Husain, peace be with him, was martyred.

Ibn Ziyad ordered Muhammed ibn al-Ash'ath, Shabth ibn Rab'i, al-Qaqa ibn Shawr al-Thuhli, Hijar ibn Abjar, Shimr Thul-Jawshan, and Amr ibn Hareeth to surrender and to discourage people from rebelling. A number of men who were controlled by fear responded positively to his call in addition to others who coveted rich rewards and were thus deceived, whereas those whose conscience was pure went underground, waiting for an opportunity to launch an attack on the camp of falsehood.

MUSLIM AT THE HOUSE OF TAW'A

Ibn Aqeel's feet took him to the quarters of Banu Jiblah who belonged to the tribe of Kindah. He stood at the door of a house of a freed bondmaid named Tawa who had a number of sons. She used to be the bondmaid of al-Ash'ath ibn Qays who freed her. Aseed al-Hadrami married her, and she gave birth to his son Bilal who was in the crowd when his mother was standing at the door waiting for him. Muslim requested her to give him some water, which she did. He then requested her to host him, telling her that he was a stranger in that land without a

family or a tribe, and that he belonged to a family capable of intercession on the Day of Judgment, and that his name was Muslim ibn Aqeel. She took him to a room which was not the same one where her son used to sleep, and she served him some food. Her son was surprised to see her entering that room quite often, so he asked her about it. She refused to answer his question except after obtaining an oath from him to keep the matter to himself.

But in the morning he informed Ibn Ziyad of where Muslim had been hiding. Ibn Ziyad dispatched al-Ash'ath accompanied by seventy men who belonged to the Qays tribe in order to arrest him. Upon hearing the horses' hoofs ploughing the ground, Muslim realized that he was being pursued, so he hurried to finish a supplication which he was reciting following the morning prayers. Then he put on his battle gear and said to his hostess Tawa: "You have carried out your share of righteousness, and you have secured your share of the intercession of the Messenger of Allah. Yesterday, I saw my uncle the Commander of the Faithful in a vision telling me that I was going to join him the next day."

He came out to face them raising his unsheathed sword as they assaulted the house, succeeding in repelling their attack. They repeated their attack, and again he repelled them, killing as many as forty-one of their men, and he was so strong that he would take hold of one man then hurl him on the rooftop.

Ibn al-Ash'ath sent a messenger to Ibn Ziyad requesting additional enforcements. The messenger came back to him carrying the latter's blame of his incompetence. He, therefore, sent him this message: "Do you think that you sent me to one of Kufa's shopkeepers, or to a Nabatean from Heera?! Rather, you sent me to one of the swords of [Prophet] Muhammed ibn Abdullah !" Ibn Ziyad then assisted him with additional soldiers.

Fighting intensified. Muslim and Bakeer ibn Hamran al-Ahmari exchanged blows. Bakeer struck Muslim on the mouth, cutting his upper lip, wounding the lower and breaking two of his lower teeth. Muslim fiercely struck him with one blow on his head and another on his shoulder muscle, almost splitting his stomach, killing him instantly.

Then they attacked him from the house's rooftop, hurling rocks at him. They kept burning reed bales then throwing them at him. He attacked them in the alley. His wounds were numerous; he bled extensively, so he supported his body on the side of the house. It was then that they assaulted him with arrows and stones. "Why do you hurl stones at me," he asked them, "as non-believers are stoned, the member of the household of the pure Prophet that I am? Do you not have any respect for the Messenger of Allah with regard to one of his own descendants?" Ibn al-Ash'ath said to him, "Please do not get yourself killed while you are in my custody." Muslim asked him, "Shall I then be captured so long as I have some strength in me? No, by Allah! This shall never be." Then he attacked Ibn al-Ash'ath who fled away before him. They attacked him from all directions. Thirst had taken its toll on him. A man stabbed him from the back, so he fell on the ground and was arrested.

Another account says that they dug a hole for him which they covered then fled before him, thus luring him to fall into it, then they arrested him. When they took his sword away from him, he wept. Amr ibn Ubaydullah al-Salami was surprised to see him weep. A man without his weapon is helpless, defenseless and vulnerable.

MUSLIM MEETS IBN ZIYAD

Muslim ibn Aqeel was brought to Ibn Ziyad. At the entrance of the mansion he saw an urn containing cooled water. He asked to drink of it. Muslim ibn Amr al-Bahili said to him, "You shall not taste one drop of it till you taste of the hameem in the fire of hell." Muslim asked him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am one who knew the truth which you rejected, and who remained faithful to his imam as you betrayed him." Muslim ibn Aqeel said to him, "May your mother lose you! How hard-hearted and rude you are! You, son of Bahilah, are more worthy of tasting of the hameem." Having said so, he sat down, supporting his back on the mansion's wall.

Imarah ibn Uqbah ibn Abu [son of] Mueet sent a slave named Qays to give him water. Whenever Muslim was about to drink of it, the cup became full of his blood. In his third attempt to drink, the cup became full of his blood and both his front teeth fell in it, so he abandoned it saying, "Had it been prescribed in destiny for me to drink it, I would

have drunk it."

Ibn Ziyad's guard came out to escort Muslim. Having entered Ibn Ziyad's room, Muslim did not greet him. The guard asked Muslim, "Why did you not greet the ameer?" "Shut your mouth," said Muslim, "he is not my ameer." It is also said that he said to Ibn Ziyad, "Peace be upon whoever followed the right guidance, feared the consequences in the hereafter, and obeyed the Exalted King," so Ibn Ziyad laughed and said, "Whether you greet or not, you shall be killed." Muslim said, "If you kill me, someone worse than you had already killed someone much better than me. Besides, you shall never abandon committing murders, setting a bad example, thinking ill of others, or being mean; having the upper hand will be the doing of anyone else but you."

Ibn Ziyad said, "You disobeyed your imam, divided the Muslims, and sowed the seeds of dissension." Muslim said, "You have uttered falsehood. Rather, those who divided the Muslims are Mu'awiyah and his son Yazid. The seeds of dissension were sown by your father, and I wish Allah will grant me to be martyred at the hand of the worst of His creation."

Then Muslim asked permission to convey his will to some of his people. He was granted permission, so he looked at those present there and saw Omer ibn Sa'd. "There is kinship between me and you," said he to him, "and I need a favour of you which you should oblige, and it is a secret between us." But he refused to listen to it, whereupon Ibn Ziyad said to him, "Do not hesitate to tend to your cousin's need." Omer stood with Muslim in a way that enabled Ibn Ziyad to see them both. Muslim conveyed his desire to him to sell his sword and shield and pay a debt in the amount of six hundred dirhams which he had borrowed since entering Kufa, to ask Ibn Ziyad to give him his corpse to bury it, and to write al-Husain to tell him what had happened to him. Omer ibn Sa'd stood up and walked to Ibn Ziyad to reveal the secret with which he had just been entrusted by Muslim! Ibn Ziyad said to Muslim, "A trustworthy person never betrays you, but you have placed your trust in a treacherous person."

Then Ibn Ziyad turned again to Muslim and said, "O son of Aqeel! You

came to a united people and disunited them." Muslim said, "No, indeed, I did not come to do that, but the people of this country claimed that your father killed their best men, shed their blood, and did what Kisra and Caesar do, so we came to them in order to enjoin justice, and to invite all to accept the judgment of the Book [of Allah]." Ibn Ziyad said, "What do you have to do with all of that? Have we not been dealing with them with equity?" Muslim said, "Allah knows that you are not telling the truth. You, in fact, kill when angry, out of enmity, and for mere suspicion." Ibn Ziyad then verbally abused him and abused Ali, Aqeel, and al-Husain, whereupon Muslim said, "You and your father are more worthy of being thus abused; so, issue whatever decree you wish, you enemy of Allah!"

It was then that Ibn Ziyad ordered a Syrian to go to the top of the mansion and to behead Muslim and throw both the head and the body to the ground. The Syrian took Muslim to the flat rooftop of the mansion as the latter kept repeating, "Subhan-Allah! La ilaha illa-Allah! Allahu Akbar!" He also kept repeating, "O Allah! Judge between us and the people who decevied, betrayed and lied to us," then he faced Medina and saluted Imam al-Husain (ع).

The Syrian struck Muslim’s neck with his sword and threw his head and body to the ground and hurried down; he was very, very much startled. Ibn Ziyad asked him what was wrong with him. "The moment I killed him," said he, "I saw a black man with an extremely ugly face standing beside me biting his finger, so I was frightened." "Perhaps you lost your mind for a moment," said Ibn Ziyad.

Hani was taken to an area of the market place where sheep are sold; his arms were tied. He kept saying, "O Mathhaj! Any man from Mathhaj to help me this day?! O Mathhaj! Where has Mathhaj gone away from me?!" Having seen that there was none to respond to him, he somehow managed to get one of his arms out of the ropes and said, "Is there anyone who would hand me a stick, a knife, a rock, or even a bone so that a man may be able to defend himself?" Guards attacked him and tied him again. He was ordered to stretch his neck so that they might strike it with their swords. "I am not going to give it away to you so generously. I shall not assist you at the cost of my own life." A Turkish

slave named Rasheed owned by Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad struck him with his sword, but he missed. Hani said, "To Allah is my return! O Allah! To Your Mercy do I come and to Your Pleasure!" Rasheed hit him again and killed him. This same slave was killed by Abdul-Rahman ibn al-Haseen al-Muradi after having seen him at the Khazar (Caspian Sea, also the Basque Sea, Tabaristan Sea, and Baku Sea, bahr baku in Arabic, an area where Islam reached in the early 9th century A.D.) in the company of Ubaydullah.

Ibn Ziyad ordered the corpses of both Muslim and Hani to be tied with ropes from their feet and dragged in the market places. Then he crucified them upside-down at the garbage collection site then sent their severed heads to Yazid who displayed them at one of the streets of Damascus.

He, Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad, wrote Yazid saying,

"Praise to Allah Who affected justice on behalf of the commander of the faithful and sufficed him for having to deal with his foes. I would like to inform the commander of the faithful, may Allah bless him, that Muslim ibn Aqeel had sought refuge at the house of Hani ibn Urwah al-Muradi, that I assigned spies for them and let men infiltrate their assemblies and plotted against them till I forced them out. Allah gave me the upper hand over them, so I killed them and sent you both of their heads with Hani ibn Abu Hayya al-Wadii al-Hamadani and az-Zubair ibn al-Arwah al-Tameemi who both are from among those who listen to and obey us; so, let the commander of the faithful ask them whatever he pleases, for there is knowledge with them, and there is truth, understanding, and piety. And peace be with you."

Yazid wrote Ibn Ziyad saying,

"You do not cease to be the source of my delight. You have behaved with strictness and assaulted with courage, maintaining your composure. You have done very well and testified to the correctness of my good impression of you. I invited your messengers and asked them and confided in them, and I found their views and merits just as you indicated; so, take good care of them. It has also come to my

knowledge that al-Husain ibn Ali has marched towards Iraq. You should, therefore, set up observation posts, prepare with arms, be cautious for mere suspicion. Kill anyone whom you suspect (of dissent). Your tenure is put to the test by this al-Husain rather than by anyone else, so is your country and your own self as governor. The outcome will determine whether you will be freed or whether you will return to slavery; so, you have to either fight him or arrest and transport him to me."

Let us now leave Kufa and its Kufian men of treachery and to al-Husain in Mecca where he was performing the rites of the pilgrimage. As he was thus engaged, Yazid dispatched thirty men disguised as pilgrims with strict instructions to assassinate him. Commenting on this attempt to assassinate him, al-Husain said, “Even if I were to bury myself in some hideout, they are sure to hunt me out and to try to force me to swear the oath of allegiance to Yazid. And if I refused, they would kill me and would not spare me without inflicting upon me the same torture as the Jews had done to Jesus.” There were unsuccessful attempts to prevent him from leaving Mecca.

Imam al-Husain (ع) did not mask his intentions and determination to fight the Umayyad regime of corruption. The speeches he delivered at Mecca were consistent with those he made elsewhere. So does his will which he wrote and entrusted to his brother Muhammed ibn al-Hanafiyya who stayed in Medina when al-Husain (ع) left it first for Mecca then for Kerbala’, Iraq. This said will was, in fact, a formal declaration of his holy revolution. He, peace be with him and upon his Ahl al-Bayt, wrote saying, "I am not campaigning because I am unwilling to accept righteousness, nor do I intend to do mischief or suppress people. Indeed, I have decided to seek to reform my grandfather’s nation. I want to enjoin what is right and to forbid what is wrong. If people accept my call for righteousness, Allah is the Master of the righteous people. Those who reject my call, I shall remain steadfast till Allah passes His judgment; surely Allah is the best of judges."

Imam al-Husain’s statements were aiming directly at stripping the "religious" mask behind which the Umayyads were hiding as they ruled

the Muslim masses. He was introducing himself to people and explaining his message to the nation. In fact, the very personality of Imam al-Husain (ع) and his religious devotion and impeccable character were all beyond question or doubt. No wonder, then, that he shouldered such a tremendous task, one which many distinguished personalities were not able to shoulder or even to raise a finger and point at the oppressors.

Let us now follow the Imam on his journey to martyrdom and eternal bliss.

Imam al-Husain (ع) left Mecca on Thul-Hijja 8, 60 A.H./September 12, 680 A.D. accompanied by his family members, slaves and Shi'as from among the people of Hijaz, Basra, and Kufa who joined him when he was in Mecca. According to p. 91 of Nafas al-Mahmum by Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, he gave each one of them ten dinars and a camel to carry his luggage.

The places (including water places and caravans' temporary tent lodges), cities and towns by which Imam al-Husain (ع) passed on his way to Taff area, where the famous Taff Battle took place, were: al-Sifah, That Irq, al-Hajir, al-Khuzaymiyya, Zarood, al-Thalabiyya, al-Shuqooq, Zubala, al-Aqaba, Sharif, al-Bayda, al-Ruhayma, al-Qadisiyya, al-Uthayb, and Qasr Muqatil. At al-Sifah, Imam al-Husain (ع) met the famous poet al-Farazdaq ibn Ghalib and asked him about the people whom he had left behind, since al-Farazdaq had come from the opposite direction and had been in Kufa. Al-Farazdaq, as we are told on p. 218, Vol. 6, of at-Tabari's Tarikh, said, "Their hearts are with you; the swords are with Banu Umayyah, and Destiny descends from the heavens."

QASR MUQATIL

When the Imam reached Qasr Muqatil, a place not far from Kufa, he found it like a beehive, full of men and horses with rows of pitched-up tents spread all over, far and wide. Ibn Ziyad had sent a detachment of 1,000 troops (very brave ones!) under the command of Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi to divert the Imam and his small band to a particular site chosen for them, and not to permit them to go anywhere except to

Kufa. At that time, when the Imam reached there, Hurr's army had become thirsty. Its water supply had been fully exhausted, and no water could be seen around for miles. On becoming aware of this, the Imam at once ordered his men to serve water to the thirsty enemy army and to their horses as well. When the time of noon prayers approached, the Imam admonished Hurr's army to give up fighting on the side of tyranny and falsehood adding, "But if you disapprove of us, and are wilfully ignoring our claim and reneging from your pledge to support us, a proxy pledge that you expressed in your letters and through your messengers, well, in that case, it does not matter, for I am quite prepared to go back (where I had come from)." But orders had already been issued to Hurr to take the Imam in his custody. The Imam asked Hurr, "Why have you come here at all?" "In obedience to my imam (meaning Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, the governor)," answered Hurr. In obeying your imam," responded Imam al-Husain (ع), "you have committed a great sin against Allah," adding after a short while, "You have lost your all, ruined your life here as well as your life hereafter. You have kindled the fire of hell for your own self and kept it ready for you to be hurled therein on the Day of Judgment. As for your imam, Allah has explicitly said in the Holy Qur'an, And We made them imams inviting them to the fire, and on the Day of Judgment, no help shall they find. In this world We made a curse to follow them, and on the Day of Judgment, they will be among the loathed and the despised' (Qur'an, 28:41-42)."

Later on, another order to Hurr came from Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad to confine the Imam and his companions to a water land waste at a distance of about 9 - 10 miles from Kufa off the bank of the Euphrates river. This area, known as al-Taff, later came to be called "Kerbala'." It is there that the historical battle which stamped and is still stamping the Islamic history and the conduct of all Muslims, took place. As a matter of fact, this battle was already predicted in the Old Testament in the following verse in Jeremiah 46:10:

... For this is the day of the Lord Allah of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge him of his adversaries, and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood, for the Lord Allah of hosts has a sacrifice in the north country by the river

Euphrates.

In his famous book titled **الصواعق المحرقة** *Al-Sawaiq al-Muhriqa* ("the burning thunderbolts), Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani writes saying that when the Imam came to that place, he took a handful of its soil and, having smelt it, he declared, "By Allah! This is the land of karb (affliction) and bala' (trial and tribulation)! Here the ladies of my haram will be taken prisoners! Here my children will be butchered and our men will be slain! Here Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet (ص) will be subjected to indignities! Here my beard will be stained with the blood of my head! And here our graves will be dug."

Historians contemporary to the Imam related that after coming to Kerbala', the Imam purchased that lot from its owners for 60,000 dinars, although it was only four miles square, so that it would be the site of his and his family's and relatives' graves.

THE KUFIAN HOSTS

Different accounts of he full number of al-Husain's camp range from seventy-two to a hundred fighters..., but how many were al-Husain's foes?! Omer ibn Sa'd was dispatched to Kerbala' to fight the Imam with 6,000 strong. Then Shabth ibn Rab'i went there to take charge of the largest fighting force of 24,000 men. The commanders' names and the numbers of their troops are here provided for the kind reader:

1. Omer ibn Sa'd	6,000
2. Shabth ibn Rab'i	24,000
3. Urwah ibn Qais	4,000
4. Sinan ibn Anas	4,000
5. Haseen ibn Nameer	9,000
6. Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan	4,000
7. Mazar ibn Ruhaynah	3,000
8. Yazid ibn Rikab	2,000
9. Najr ibn KharShi'ah	2,000
10. Muhammed ibn al-Ash'ath	1,000
11. Abdullah ibn Haseen	1,000
12. Khawli ibn Yazid al-Asbahi	1,000
13. Bakr ibn Kasab ibn Talhah	3,000

14. Hijr ibn Abjar	1,000
15. Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi	3,000
TOTAL:	**68,000**

The reader can notice that some of these commanders had already written al-Husain (ع) inviting him to go to Kufa so that they would support him in putting an end to the tyranny of the Umayyads. The details of how those men changed heart and the amounts of money they received are too lengthy to include in this brief account.

EFFORTS TO SECURE WATER

The access to water was cut off on the seventh day of Muharram and, before the evening of the eighth, the young, the children, and the women grew extremely restless, being overcome by the pangs of thirst. On the morning of the eighth, al-Abbas son of Ali ibn Abu Talib, al-Husain's brother, who was appointed by al-Husain (ع) as commander-in-chief of the tiny force, began digging wells assisted by all loyal companions and kinsmen of the Imam. They succeeded in boring a well, but stones were found instead of water. They soon dug another, but no water was found in it. The Imam then requested his brother al-Abbas to go to fetch water from the Euphrates. Al-Abbas took thirty cavaliers and twenty footmen and twenty large-size empty water-bags. After a fierce battle at the river's bank, they succeeded in fetching water. Although they themselves were extremely thirsty, they refused to drink before the others. Al-Abbas, hence, was given the title of "Saqqah," the water-bearer, ever since. When Omer ibn Sa'd came to know about this incident, he reinforced the detachment sent to guard the Euphrates against al-Husain's people having access to the water. The total force guarding the water now reached 800...! Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad himself sent a letter to Omer ibn Sa'd telling him that, "It is necessary to take more precautions so that they (al-Husain's folks) may not be able to obtain a drop of water."

CONDITIONAL RESPITE GRANTED

Imam al-Husain (ع) knew that war was unavoidable, so he asked his foes to put off the fighting for one night since, he said, he wanted to spend it praying to Allah. It was grudgingly granted. On the other hand, the misery of the prevailing conditions at al-Husain's camp due to the shortage of water caused by the water supply being intercepted could not be imagined. The only survivor of that tragedy, namely al-Husain's ailing son Ali, said later on about their suffering, "We, all in all, were twenty children, and we were very thirsty and crying for water, gasping with thirst." It is also noteworthy that this same survivor's offspring and supporters later on established the Fatimide ruling dynasty in north Africa with its capital first at Qairawan, Tunisia, then at Cairo, Egypt. The Fatimide caliph al-Muizz li Deenillah founded Cairo and built its renown al-Azhar mosque and university.

ANOTHER CONFRONTATION AT WATERING PLACE

Burayr al-Hamadani, a loyal companion of Imam al-Husain (ع), tried to fetch water, igniting a fierce battle at the river's bank. He and only three brave warriors had to face the entire 800-strong regiment guarding the watering place. The battle cries reached al-Husain's camp, whereupon the Imam ordered a rescue mission. Water was miraculously brought in a single water-skin. All the children rushed to it, frantically trying to quench their thirst therewith. Crowding around it, some were pressing it to them, others falling upon it till, alas, suddenly the mouth of the water-skin flung open by the children's crowding upon it and all the water flowed out on the dusty floor. All the children loudly cried and lamented saying, "O Burayr! All the water you have brought us is gone!"

FIRM RESOLUTION

In the eve of the ninth of Muharram, Imam al-Husain (ع) gathered all his companions together and said to them, "Whoever remains with me will be killed tomorrow; so, consider this opportunity as Allah-sent and take advantage of the darkness and go home to your villages." He then extinguished the light so that those who wanted to go away might not be too embarrassed when seen by others. al-Husain's loyal companions burst out in inconsolable weeping and distressfully said to him, "Mawla (master)! Do not thus shame us before the Messenger of Allah, before Ali and Fatima! With what face will we present ourselves to them on the Day of Judgment? Were we to desert you, may the wild beasts of the jungle tear us to pieces."

Having said so, the faithful companions drew their swords out of their scabbards. Then they threw the scabbards in the fire of a ditch dug to protect the tents of the ladies. Holding their naked swords, they offered humble supplications to the Almighty beseeching Him thus: "O Lord of the creation! We are passing through the sea of trouble and sorrow in obedience to Your Prophet (ص) and in defense of the religion. You are the Sustainer of our honour and reputation. You are our Lord and Master. Grant us the strength of will and the spirit of enduring patience and perseverence so that we may remain firm and give our all in Your Path."

LOVE AND DEVOTION

Al-Qasim son of Imam al-Hasan son of Ali ibn Abu Talib, nephew of Imam al-Husain (ع), was a 13-year old lad. He sought audience with the Imam in order to inquire whether his name was on the list of martyrs. "Your name," answered al-Husain (ع), "is also included in the list of martyrs. You will be killed, and so will my suckling baby Ali al-Asghar." After a short while, the Imam continued saying, "I, too, will be killed, but Allah will continue my lineage. How would the cruel oppressors succeed in putting an end to his [Ali Zain al-Abidan's] life when eight Imams are to be born as his offspring?"

In a tent sat Umm Kulthum, sister of al-Abbas, watching her brother polishing his weapons. She wore a woe-begone face, and tears kept trickling down her cheeks. Suddenly al-Abbas happened to look up. Seeing her tears, he inquired, "Honoured sister, why are you weeping?" "How could I help doing so," she replied, adding, "since I am an unlucky childless woman? Tomorrow, all the ladies will offer the lives of their sons for the Imam, whom shall I offer, having no son of my own?" Tears trickling down his cheeks, al-Abbas said, "Sister! From now on, I am your slave, and tomorrow you offer me, your slave, as a sacrifice for the Imam." Who else, dear reader, would call himself a slave of his sister besides al-Abbas? Such are the Ahl al-Bayt , and such are their manners.

ASHURA

The author of **صلاح النشأتين** *Salah al-Nash'atayn* records saying that the tragic and historical battle culminated on a Friday, the tenth of Muharram, 61 A.H., corresponding to October 13, 680 A.D., a day known in Islamic history as Ashura. Imam al-Husain (ع) delivered two sermons to the misled souls that surrounded him from all directions, trying to bring them back to their senses, but it was to no avail.

ثمّ دعا براحلته فركبها ، و نادى بصوت عال يسمعه جلّهم : أيّها النّاس اسمعوا قَولي ، ولا تعجلوا حتّى أعظكم بما هو حقّ لكم عليَّ ، وحتّى أعتذر إليكم من مَقدمي عليكم ، فإن قبلتم عذري وصدقتم قولي وأعطيتموني النّصف من أنفسكم ، كنتم بذلك أسعد ، ولم يكن لكم عليَّ سبيل . وإنْ لَم تقبلوا مِنّي العذر ولَم تعطوا النّصف من أنفسكم ، فأجمعوا أمركم و شركاءكم ثمّ لا يكن أمركم عليكم غمّة . ثمّ اقضوا إليَّ ولا تنظرون . إنّ وليّ الله الذي نزل الكتاب وهو يتولّى الصالحين. فلمّا سمعنَ النّساء هذا منه صحنَ وبكينَ وارتفعت أصواتهنَّ ، فأرسل

إليهنَّ أخاه العبّاس وابنه علياً الأكبر وقال لهما : (سكّتاهنَّ فلعمري ليكثر بكاؤهنّ. ولمّا سكتنَ ، حمد الله وأثنى عليه وصلّى على محمّد وعلى الملائكة والأنبياء وقال في ذلك ما لا يحصى ذكره ولَم يُسمع متكلّم قبله ولا بعده أبلغ منه في منطقه ، ثمّ قال : عباد الله ، اتقوا الله وكونوا من الدنيا على حذر ؛ فإنّ الدنيا لَو بقيت على أحد أو بقي عليها أحد لكانت الأنبياء أحقّ بالبقاء وأولى بالرضا وأرضى بالقضاء ، غير أنّ الله خلق الدنيا للفناء ، فجديدها بالٍ ونعيمها مضمحل وسرورها مكفهر ، والمنزل تلعة والدار قلعة ، فتزوّدوا فإنّ خير الزاد التقوى ، واتقوا الله لعلّكم تفلحون. أيّها النّاس إنّ الله تعالى خلق الدنيا فجعلها دار فناء وزوال متصرفة بأهلها حالاً بعد حال ، فالمغرور من غرّته والشقي من فتنته ، فلا تغرّنكم هذه الدنيا ، فإنّها تقطع رجاء من ركن إليها وتُخيّب طمع من طمع فيها . وأراكم قد اجتمعتم على أمر قد أسخطتم الله فيه عليكم وأعرض بوجهه الكريم عنكم وأحلَّ بكم نقمته ، فنِعمَ الربّ ربّنا وبئس العبيد أنتم ؛ أقررتم بالطاعة وآمنتم بالرسول محمّد (ص) ، ثمّ إنّكم زحفتم إلى ذريّته وعترته تريدون قتلهم ، لقد استحوذ عليكم الشيطان فأنساكم ذكر الله العظيم ، فتبّاً لكم ولِما تريدون . إنّا لله وإنّا إليه راجعون هؤلاء قوم كفروا بعد إيمانهم فبُعداً للقوم الظالمين . أيّها النّاس أنسبوني مَن أنا ثمّ ارجعوا إلى أنفسكم وعاتبوها وانظروا هل يحلّ لكم قتلي وانتهاك حرمتي ؟ ألستُ ابن بنت نبيّكم وابن وصيّه وابن عمّه وأول المؤمنين بالله والمصدّق لرسوله بما جاء من عند ربّه ؟ أوَ ليس حمزة سيّد الشهداء عمّ أبي ؟ أوَ ليس جعفر الطيّار عمّي ، أوَ لَم يبلغكم قول رسول الله لي ولأخي : هذان سيّدا شباب أهل الجنّة ؟ فإنْ صدّقتموني بما أقول وهو الحقّ ـ والله ما تعمدتُ الكذب منذ علمت أنّ الله يمقت عليه أهله ويضرّ به من اختلقه ـ وإنْ كذّبتموني فإنّ فيكم مَن إنْ سألتموه عن ذلك أخبركم ، سلوا جابر بن عبد الله الأنصاري ، وأبا سعيد الخدري ، وسهل بن سعد الساعدي ، وزيد بن أرقم ، وأنس بن مالك يخبروكم أنّهم سمعوا هذه المقالة من رسول الله لي ولأخي ، أما في هذا حاجز لكم عن سفك دمي ؟! فقال الشمر : هو يعبد الله على حرف إنْ كان يدري ما يقول . فقال له حبيب بن مظاهر : والله إنّي أراك تعبد الله على سبعين حرفاً ، وأنا أشهد أنّك صادق ما تدري ما يقول ، قد طبع الله على قلبك . ثمّ قال الحسين (ع) : فإنْ كنتم في شكٍّ من هذا القول ، أفتشكّون أنّي ابن بنت نبيّكم ، فوالله ما بين المشرق والمغرب ابن بنت نبي غيري فيكم ولا في غيركم ، ويحكم اتطلبوني بقتيل منكم قتلته ؟! أو مال لكم استهلكته ؟! أو بقصاص جراحة ؟! ، فأخذوا لا يكلّمونه ! فنادى : يا شبث بن ربعي ، ويا حَجّار بن أبجر ، ويا قيس بن الأشعث ، ويا زيد بن الحارث: ألم تكتبوا إليَّ أنْ اقدم قد أينعت الثمار واخضرّ الجناب ، وإنّما تقدم على جند لك مجنّدة ؟

فقالوا: لَم نفعل . قال : سبحان الله ! بلى والله لقـد فعلتـم. ثـمّ قـال : أيّها النّاس ، إذا كرهتموني فدعوني أنصرف عنكم إلى مأمن من الأرض. فقال له قَيس بن الأشعث : أولا تنزل على حكم بني عمّـك ؟ فـإنّهم لَـن يروك إلاّ ما تُحبّ ولَن يصـل إليـك منهـم مكـروه . فقـال الحسـين عليـه السّلام : أنت أخو أخيك ، أتريد أن يطلبك بنو هاشم أكثر مـن دم مسـلم بن عقيل ؟ لا والله لا أُعطيكم بيدي إعطاء الذليل ولا أفرّ فـرار العبيـد ، عباد الله إنّي عذتُ بربّي وربّكم أنْ ترجمون ، أعوذ بربّي وربّكم من كـلّ متكبِّر لا يؤمن بيوم الحساب). ثمّ أناخ وأمر عقبة بن سمعان فعقلها.

The dumb and stone-hearted rogues were not affected by al-Husain's eloquent sermons. He asked them, "Am I not your Prophet's grandson? Am I not the son of the Commander of the Faithful, cousin of the Prophet and the first male to believe in the divine message of Allah? Is not Hamzah, the head of the martyrs, my father's uncle? Is not the martyr Ja'far al-Tayyar my uncle? Did the Prophet not reach your ears with words spoken in reference to me and to my elder brother (al-Hasan), saying, These (al-Hasan and al-Husain (ع) are the masters of the youths of Paradise'?"

The renown historian at-Tabari and all other historians unanimously record that when al-Husain (ع) proceeded so far in his sermon, the audience was moved against their wish, so much so that tears began to flow from the eyes of friends and foes alike. It was only al-Hurr, however, who was truly moved to the extent of stirring to action. Slowly did he walk as he kept saying, "Allah! I turn to You in repentance from the depth of my heart, so do forgive me and forgive my sinful misconduct towards the Prophet's beloved Ahl al-Bayt." Approaching the Imam with eyes streaming with tears, with his shield turned the other way and his spear turned upside-down, he knelt down and kept crawling on his knees till he reached the Imam and fell on his feet kissing them, begging for his forgiveness. Al-Husain (ع) accepted his apologies and prayed for him. Meanwhile, al-Hurr's defection alarmed Omer ibn Sa'd, the commander-in-chief of the enemies of al-Husain (ع) and of Allah. He was afraid such defection might encourage other commanders of his army to do likewise. Calling his slave, who was bearing the standard, he put an arrow on the string of his bow and discharged it at al-Husain (ع), signaling the beginning of the battle.

Martyrs fell one after another, recording epics of heroism unlike any others in the entire history of the human race. Their names and deeds of heroism are recorded on the pages of history for all generations to come.

خطبة الحسين الثانية

ثمّ إنّ الحسين (ع) ركب فرسه ، وأخذ مصحفاً ونشره على رأسه ، ووقف بإزاء القوم وقال : ((يا قوم ، إنّ بيني وبينكم كتاب الله وسنّة جدّي رسول الله (ص)) (3. ثمّ استشهدهم عن نفسه المقدّسة وما عليه من سيف النّبي (ص) ولامته وعمامته فأجابوه بالتصديق . فسألهم عمّا أخذهم على قتله ؟ قالوا : طاعةً للأمير عبيد الله بن زياد ، فقال عليه السّلام : ((تبّاً لكم أيّتها الجماعة و ترحاً ، أحين استصرختمونا وآلهين فأصرخناكم موجفين ، سللتم علينا سيفاً لنا في أيمانكم وحششتم علينا ناراً اقتدحناها على عدوّنا وعدوّكم ، فأصبحتم إلباً لأعدائكم على أوليائكم ، بغير عدل أفشوه فيكم ولا أمل أصبح لكم فيهم . فهلاّ ــ لكم الويلات ! ــ تركتمونا والسّيف مشيم والجأش طامن والرأي لَما يستحصف ، ولكنْ أسرعتم إليها كطيرة (1) الدبا وتداعيتم عليها كتهافت الفراش ، ثمّ نقضتموها ، فسحقاً لكم يا عبيد الأمة وشذاذ الأحزاب ونبذة الكتاب ومحرّفي الكلِم وعصبة الإثم ونفثة الشيطان ومطفئيّ السّنَن ! ويحكم أهؤلاء تعضدون وعنّا تتخاذلون ! أجل والله غدر فيكم قديم وشجت عليه أُصولكم وتأزّرت فروعكم فكنتم أخبث ثمرة ، شجى للناظر وأكلة للغاصب ! ألا وإنّ الدّعيّ بن الدعيّ قد ركز بين اثنَتين ؛ بين السّلة والذلّة ، وهيهات منّا الذلّة ، يأبي الله لنا ذلك ورسوله والمؤمنون وحجور طابت وطهرت وأُنوف حميّة ونفوس أبيّة ، من أن نؤثر طاعة اللئام من مصارع الكرام ، ألا وإنّي زاحف بهذه الأُسرة على قلّة العدد وخذلان النّاصر). ثمّ أنشد أبيات فروة بن مُسيك المرادي(2.) أما والله ، لا تلبثون بعدها إلاّ كريثما يركب الفرس ، حتّى تدور بكم دور الرحى وتقلق بكم قلق المحور ، عهدٌ عَهَده إليَّ أبي عن جدّي رسول الله ، فاجمعوا أمركم وشركاءكم ، ثمّ لا يكن أمركم عليكم غمّة ثمّ اقضوا إليَّ ولا تنظرون ، إنّي توكّلت على الله ربّي وربّكم ، ما من دابّة إلاّ هو آخذ بناصيتها إنّ ربّي على صراط المستقيم (2. ثمّ رفع يدَيه نحو السّماء وقال : ((اللهمّ ، احبس عنهم قطر السّماء ، وابعث عليهم سنين كسنيّ يوسف ، وسلّط عليهم غلام ثقيف يسقيهم كأساً مصبرة ، فإنّهم كذبونا وخذلونا ، وأنت ربّنا عليك توكّلنا وإليك المصير (3. والله لا يدع أحداً منهم إلاّ انتقم لي منه ، قتلةً بقتلة وضربةً بضربة ، وإنّه لينتصر لي ولأهل بيتي وأشياعي .

THE FIRST LADY MARTYR

Wahab ibn Abu Wahab, a Christian, and his wife, also a Christian, were married only a fortnight ago. Having witnessed what went on between al-Husain (ع) and his foes, they sympathized with al-Husain (ع) and embraced the Islamic creed at his hands. The words of the Imam's sermons penetrated their hearts and found an echo. Wahab's mother, still Christian, said to her son, "I will not be pleased with you till you give your life away for the sake of al-Husain (ع)." Wahab charged at the enemies of Allah like a lion, and when a man from Kufa severed his right arm, he transferred the sword to the left and went on fighting as if nothing at all had happened. Soon his left arm, too, was lopped off by a single stroke of a sword, and the hero fell to the ground. His wife watched the whole scene. She pleaded to the Imam thus as she darted towards his enemies, "O Imam! Please do not ask me to go back! I prefer to die fighting rather than to fall captive in the hands of Banu Umayyah!" The Imam tried to dissuade her, explaining to her that fighting is not mandated on women, but at seeing her husband martyred, she ran to him and, putting his lifeless head in her lap, she began to wipe it with her clothes. Soon a slave of Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan put an end to her life while she was thus engaged; may the Almighty shower His blessings upon her. It is unanimously agreed upon by the historians that she was the first lady to be martyred on that day. Wahab's mother was very happy. She said, "Allah! Thank You for saving my honour through my son's martyrdom before the Imam." Then the old Christian lady turned to the Kufians and said, "You wicked people! I bear witness that the Christians in their churches and the Zoroastrians in their fire houses are better people than you!" Saying so, she seized a stout candle (or, according to other accounts, a tent post) in her hand and fell upon the enemies, sending two of them to hell. The Imam sent two of his companions to bring her back. When she stood before him, he said to her, "O bondmaid of Allah! Women are not allowed to go to war. Sit down; I assure you that you and your son will be with my grandfather in Paradise." Another martyr to be mentioned here, who was also Christian, is John, a slave of the great *sahabi* Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, may Allah be pleased with both of them. He had been for many years in the service of Abu Tharr, and although he was a very old man (according to some accounts, he was 90 years old), he fought al-Husain's enemies till he was martyred.

AL-ABBAS IS MARTYRED

The story of the martyrdom of al-Abbas is a very sad one. Unfortunately, there is no room here to provide you with all its details due to the lack of space; therefore, we have to summarize it to you in a few words. Al-Abbas ventured to bring water to the wailing thirsty children. He individually had to face the eight hundred soldiers guarding the bank of the Euphrates against al-Husain (ع) and his small band having access to it. He was al-Husain's standard-bearer. Both his arms were severed, one after the other, and arrows made his body look like a porcupine. One of those arrows penetrated his right eye... When al-Husain (ع) saw his brother fall like that, he wept profusely as he said, "Now I have become spineless..." When al-Husain (ع) tried to carry him to his camp, al-Abbas pleaded to him not to do so since he could not stand hearing the cries of the thirsty children especially since he had promised to bring them some water. He hated to go back to them empty-handed. Al-Husain (ع), therefore, honoured his last wish; al-Abbas breathed his last as his brother al-Husain (ع) was holding to him...

MARTYRDOM OF THE IMAM

The Imam was also very courageous, so much so that he had already been called "the lion of Banu Hashim." He had participated in the wars waged by his father, the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), in defense of the creed against the hypocrites led by the Umayyads and against the Kharijites, proving his military ability and mastership of the art of war. Had the Muslims of today mastered this art, and had they been able to make their own weapons rather than import them from others, they would not have been forced to sell their God-given natural resources, especially oil, dirt cheap to those who do not wish them any good. Had the rulers of the Muslim world learned how to get along with each other, they would have cooperated with each other for their own common good. Had the Muslims of the world implemented the commandments of their creed as strictly as they are supposed to, no unjust or tyrannical ruler would have ever ruled them... I think that such rulers, the likes of Yazid, are the main cause of the pathetic situation wherein the Muslims of the world find themselves at the present time, yet these rulers derive their strength from the weakness of their

subjects; so, one problem is connected to the other...

Narrators of this incident record saying that there was hardly any place in al-Husain's body that escaped a sword stroke or an arrow, and the same can be said about his horse al-Sahab which used to belong to Prophet Muhammed (ص) who, shortly before breathing his last, gave it to his right hand, cousin, and son-in-law Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). Al-Husain's older brother, Imam al-Hasan (ع), inherited it; after his martyrdom, it became the property of Imam al-Husain (ع). Having become too feeble to fight, he stood to rest. It was then that a man threw a stone at him, hitting his forehead and causing his blood to run down his face. He took his shirt to wipe his blood from his eyes just as another man shot him with a three-pronged arrow which pierced his chest and settled in his heart. He instantly said, "In the Name of Allah, through Allah, and on the creed of the Messenger of Allah [do I die]." Raising his head to the heavens, he said, "Lord! You know that they are killing a man besides whom there is no other son of Your Prophet's daughter." As soon as he took the arrow out of his back, blood gushed forth like a drain pipe. He placed his hand on his wound and once his hand was filled with blood, he threw it above saying, "Make what has happened to me easy for me; it is being witnessed by Allah." Not a single drop of that blood fell on the ground. Then he put it back a second time, and it was again filled with blood. This time he rubbed it on his face and beard as he said, "Thus shall I appear when I meet my Lord and my grandfather the Messenger of Allah (ع), drenched in my blood. It is then that I shall say: O grandfather! So-and-so killed me.'"

Bleeding soon sapped his strength, so he sat down on the ground, feeling his head being too heavy. Malik ibn al-Nisr noticed his condition, so he taunted him then dealt him a stroke with his sword on the head. Al-Husain (ع) was wearing a burnoose which soon became full of blood. Al-Husain (ع) said, "May you never be able to eat or drink with your right hand, and may Allah gather you among the oppressors." Having said so, the dying Imam threw his burnoose away and put on a turban on top of his capuche cap.

Hani ibn Thabeet al-Hadrami has said, "I was standing with nine other men when al-Husain (ع) was killed. It was then that I looked and saw

one of the children from al-Husain's family wearing a robe and a shirt, and he was wearing two ear-rings. He held a post from those buildings and stood startled looking right and left. A man came running. Having come close to that child, the man leaned from his horse and killed that child with his horse. When he was shamed for thus killing a helpless child, he revealed his last name..."

That child was Muhammed ibn Abu Sa'd ibn Aqeel ibn Abu Talib. His mother, dazed, stunned, and speechless, kept looking at him as the incident unfolded before her very eyes...

The enemies of Allah waited for a short while then returned to al-Husain (ع) whom they surrounded as he sat on the ground unable to stand. Abdullah son of Imam al-Hasan (ع), grandson of the Prophet (ص), who was eleven years old, looked and saw how his uncle was being surrounded by those people, so he came running towards him. Zainab, al-Husain's revered sister, wanted to restrain him but he managed to evade her and to reach his uncle. Bahr ibn Kab lowered his head to strike al-Husain (ع), so the child shouted, "O son of the corrupt woman, are you going to strike my uncle?" The man dealt a blow from his sword which the child received with his hand, cutting it off. The child cried in agony, "O uncle!" Then he fell in the lap of al-Husain (ع) who hugged him and said, "O son of my brother! Be patient with regard to what has befallen us, and consider it as goodness, for Allah, the most Exalted, will make you join your righteous ancestors." Then he raised his hands and supplicated saying, "O Allah! Let them enjoy themselves for some time then divide them and make them into parties, and do not let their rulers ever be pleased with them, for they invited us to support us, then they turned their backs to us and fought us."

Harmalah ibn Kahil shot the child with an arrow, killing him as he sat in his uncle's lap.

Al-Husain (ع) remained lying on the ground for some time. Had those rogues wished to kill him, they could have done so, but each tribe relied on the other to do what it hated to do itself. Al-Shimr shouted, "What are you standing like that for?! What do you expect the man to do since your arrows and spears have wounded him so heavily? Attack him!"

Zarah ibn Shareek struck him on his left shoulder with his sword while al-Haseen shot him with an arrow which penetrated his mouth; another man struck him on the shoulder. Sinan ibn Anas stabbed him in his collar bone area of the chest then shot him with an arrow in the neck. Salih ibn Wahab stabbed him in the side...

قال هلال بن نافع كنت واقفاً نحو الحسين وهو يجود بنفسه ، فوالله ما رأيت قتيلاً قطّ مضمّخاً بدمه أحسن منه وجهاً ولا أنور ، ولقد شغلني نور وجهه عن الفكرة في قتله . فاستقى في هذه الحال ماء فأبوا ان يسقوه . وقال له رجل : لا تذوق الماء حتّى ترد الحامية فتشرب من حميمها . فقال عليه السّلام : ((أنا أرد الحامية ؟! وإنّما أرد على جدّي رسول الله وأسكن معه في داره في مقعد صدق عند مليك مقتدر وأشكو إليه ما ارتكبتم منّي وفعلتم بي). فغضبوا بأجمعهم حتّى كأنّ الله لَم يجعل في قلب أحدهم من الرحمة شيئاً.

Hilal ibn Nafi` has said, "I was standing in front of al-Husain (ع) as he was drawing his last breath. Never did I ever see anyone whose face looked better or more glowing as he was stained with his own blood! In fact, the light emanating from his face distracted me altogether from the thought of killing him! As he was in such a condition, he asked for some water to drink, but they refused to give him any."

A man said to him, "You shall not taste of water till you reach hell from whose hot boiling water shall you drink." He, peace be with him said, "Am I the one who will reach it? Rather, I will reach my grandfather the Messenger of Allah (ع) and reside with him in his abode of truth near an Omnipotent King, and I shall complain to him about what crimes you committed against me and what you have done to me." They all became very angry. It is as if Allah did not leave an iota of compassion in their hearts. When his condition worsened, al-Husain (ع) raised his eyes to the heavens and said,

"O Allah! Sublime You are, Great of Might, Omnipotent, Independent of all creation, greatly Proud, Capable of doing whatever You please, Forthcoming in mercy, True of Promise, Inclusive of Blessings,

Clement, Near to those who invoke Him, Subduing His creation, Receptive to Repentance, Able, Overpowering, Appreciative when thanked, Remembering those who remember Him! Thee do I call upon out of my want, and Thee do I seek out of need! From Thee do I seek help when in fear and cry when depressed! Thine help do I seek in my weakness, and upon Thee do I rely! O Allah! Judge between us and our people, for they deceived and betrayed us. They were treacherous to us, and they killed us although we are the Itrat of Your Prophet and the offspring of the one You love: Muhammed (ص) whom You chose for Your Message and entrusted with the revelation. Do find an ease for our affair and an exit, O most Merciful of all merciful ones! Grant me patience to bear Your destiny, O Lord! There is no Allah but You! O Helper of those who seek help! I have no Allah besides You, nor do I adore anyone but You! Grant me to persevere as I face Your decree, O Helper of the helpless, O Eternal One Who knows no end, O One Who brings the dead back to life, O One Who rewards every soul as it earned, do judge between me and them; surely You are the best of judges."

HUSAIN'S HORSE

Al-Husain's horse came circling around him, rubbing his head on his blood. It was then that Ibn Sa'd shouted, "The horse! Get the horse, for it is one of the horses of the Messenger of Allah!" Horsemen surrounded that horse which kept kicking with its front legs, killing forty riders and ten horses. Ibn Sa'd then said, "Leave him and let us see what he does." Once he felt secure, the horse went back to al-Husain (ع) to rub his head on the Imam's blood as he sniffed him. He was neighing very loudly. Imam Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (ع) used to say that that horse was repeating these words: "Retribution! Retribution against a nation that killed the son of its Prophet's daughter!" The horse then went to the camp neighing likewise. When the women saw the horse without its rider and its saddle twisted, they went out, their hair spread out, beating their cheeks, their faces uncovered, screaming and wailing, feeling the humiliation after enjoying prestige, going in the direction of the place where al-Husain (ع) had been killed.

Umm Kulthum, Zainab the wise, cried out, "O Muhammed! O father! O Ali! O Ja'far! O Hamzah! Here is al-Husain in the open slain in

Kerbala'!" Then Zainab said, "I wish the heavens had fallen upon the earth! I wish the mountains had crushed the valley!" She was near al-Husain (ع) when Omer ibn Sa'd came close to her flanked by some of his men. Al-Husain (ع) was drawing his last breath. She cried out, "O Omer ! Should Abu Abdullah be killed as you look on?!" He turned his face away. His tears were flooding his beard. She said, "Woe unto you! Is there any Muslim man among you?" None answered her. Then Omer Ibn Sa'd shouted at people, "Alight and put him to rest!" Al-Shimr was the first to do so. He kicked the Imam with his foot then sat on his chest and took hold of his holy beard. He dealt him twelve sword strokes. He then severed his sacred head...

AL-HUSAIN MARAUDED

Those folks now took to maurauding the Imam: Ishaq ibn Hawayh took his shirt. Al-Akhnas ibn Murthid ibn Alqamah al-Hadrami took his turban. Al-Aswad ibn Khalid took his sandals. Jamee ibn al-Khalq al-Awdi, and some say a man from Tameem named al-Aswad ibn Hanzalah, took his sword.

Bajdal came. He saw the Imam (ع) wearing a ring covered with his blood. He cut his finger off and took the ring... Qays ibn al-Ash'ath took his velvet on which he since then used to sit, so he came to be called "Qays Qateefa." Qateefa is Arabic for velvet. His worn out garment was taken by Jaoonah ibn Hawiyyah al-Hadrami. His bow and outer garments were taken by al-Raheel ibn Khaythamah al-Jufi and Hani ibn Shabeeb al-Hadrami and Jarar Ibn Mas'ud al-Hadrami. A man among them wanted to take his underpants after all his other clothes had been taken away by others. This man said, "I wanted to take it off, but he had put his right hand on it which I could not lift; therefore, I severed his right hand... He then put his left hand on it which I also could not lift, so I severed it, too, and I was about to bare him and take it off when I heard a rumbling like that of an earthquake, so I became frightened. I left him and fell into a swoon, a slumber. While I was unconscious, I saw the Prophet, Ali, Fatima, and al-Hasan, in a vision. Fatima was saying, O son! They killed you! May Allah kill them!' He said to her, O mother! This sleeping man has severed my hands!' She then invoked Allah's curse on me saying, May Allah cut your hands

and legs, and may He blind you and hurl you into the fire!' Indeed, I am now blind. My hands and legs have already been amputated, and nothing remains from her curse except the fire."

PART II

A SUMMARY OF POST-MARTYRDOM EVENTS

When al-Husain (ع) was martyred, people fell upon his luggage and belongings looting everything they could find in his tents[1], then they set the tents to fire. People raced to rob the ladies of the Messenger of Allah (ع). Daughters of Fatima al-Zahra' (ع) tearfully ran away, their hair uncovered[2]. Scarves were snatched, rings were pulled out of fingers, ear-rings were taken out, and so were ankle-rings[3]. A man took both ear-rings belonging to Umm Kulthum, riddling her ears in the process[4]. Another approached Fatima daughter of al-Husain (ع), taking her ankle-rings out. He was weeping as he committed his foul deed. "What is the matter with you?," she asked him. "How can I help weeping," he answered, "since I am looting the daughter of the Messenger of Allah?" She asked him to leave her alone. He said, "I am afraid if I do not take it, someone else will."[5]

Another man was seen driving the women with the butt of his spear, having robbed them of their coverings and jewelry as they sought refuge with one another. He was seen by the same Fatima. Having realized that she had seen him, he went towards her, and she fled away. He threw his spear at her; she fell headlong and fainted. When she recovered, she saw her aunt, Umm Kulthum, sitting at her head crying.[6]

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1 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 32.

2 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 260.

3 Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 40.

4 Muhammed Jawad Shubbar, *Al-Dama al-Sakiba*, p. 348.

5 al-Saduq, *Aamali*, p. 99, *majlis* 31. al-Thahbi, *Siyar Alam al-Nubala'*, Vol. 3, p. 204.

6 Mawla Husain ibn Mawla Muhammed al-Jammi (known as the virtuous

A woman from the clan of Bakr ibn Wa'il, who was accompanied by her husband, saw the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (ع) in such a condition, so she cried out, "O offspring of Bakr ibn Wa'il! Do you permit the daughters of the Messener of Allah (ع) to be robbed like that? There is no judgment except Allah's! O how the Messenger of Allah (ع) should be avenged!" Her husband brought her back to his conveyance[1].

The rogues reached Ali son of al-Husain (ع) who was sick on his bed unable to stand up[2]. Some were saying, "Do not let any of them, young or old, alive." Others were saying, "Do not be rash in your judgment till we consult the governor Amr ibn Sa'd."[3] Al-Shimr unsheathed his sword with the intention to kill Ali. Hameed ibn Muslim said to him, "Glory to Allah! Do you really kill children?! He is only a sick lad!"[4] He said, "Ibn Ziyad ordered all al-Husain's sons killed." Ibn Sa'd went to extremes to stop him[5] especially after having heard the wise lady Zainab daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (ع) saying, "You

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man of Jamm) *Riyad al-Musa'ib fil Mawaiz wal Tawarikh wal Siyar wal Musa'ib*, p. 341. al-Qazwini, *Tazallum al-Zahra'*, p. 130.

1 Ibn Tawoos, namely Sayyid Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far, *Al-Luhuf fi Qatla al-Tufuf*, p. 74. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 41.

2 Reference to the sickness of Ali son of al-Husain, as-Sajjad (ع) is referred to by at-Tabari on p. 260, Vol. 6, of his *Tarikh*. It is also mentioned by Ibn al-Atheer on p. 33, Vol. 4, of his book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, by Ibn Katheer on p. 188, Vol. 8, of his book *Al-Bidaya*, by al-Yafii on p. 133, Vol. 1, of his book *Mir'at al-Jinan*, by Shaikh al-Mufid in his book *Kitab Al-Irshad*, by Ibn Shahr Ashub on p. 225, Vol. 2, of his book *Manaqib*, by al-Tibrisi on p. 148 of his book *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda*, by Muhammed ibn Ahmed ibn Ali al-Nishapuri on p. 162 of his book *Rawdat al-Waizeen*, and by al-Mas'udi on p. 140 of his book *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*.

3 al-Qazwini, *Tazallum al-Zahra'*, p. 132.

4 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 260.

5 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*.

will not kill him before killing me first;" so, they left him alone[1].

Ibn Sa'd himself came to the ladies who burst in tears upon seeing him. He ordered the men to stay away from them. Those men had already taken all the ornaments those ladies had had and never returned any of them back. He assigned to a group of men the task of protecting them, then he returned to his tent.

THE STEED

Ibn Sa'd shouted, "Who volunteers to make sure that the chest and the back of al-Husain (ع) are run over by the horses?" Ten men stood up.[2] Those miscreant "volunteers" were: Ishaq ibn Hawiyyah, al-Ahbash ibn Murshid ibn Alqamah ibn Salamah al-Hadrami, Hakeem ibn al-Tufayl al-Sinbisi, Amr ibn Sabeeh al-Saydawi, Raja' ibn Munqith al-Abdi, Salim ibn Khaythamah al-Jufi, Salih ibn Wahab al-Jufi, Wakhit ibn Ghanim, Hani ibn Thabeet al-Hadrami, and Aseed ibn Malik. They rode their horses and trampled upon the body of the fragrant flower of the Messenger of Allah...

Ibn Ziyad ordered liberal awards to be given to them[3]. Al-Bayruni has said that they did to al-Husain (ع) what no other nation had ever done to their most evil ones: killing with the sword or the spear, with stone throwing, and with horse trampling[4]. Some of those horses reached Egypt were their shoes were pulled out and fixed on doors as means of seeking blessings. This became a custom among them, so much so that many of them started making the like of those shoes and hanging them

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1 al-Qarmani, *Tarikh*, p. 108.

2 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 161. Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 33. al-Mas'udi, *Muraj al-Thahab*, Vol. 2, p. 91. al-Maqrazi, *Khutat*, Vol. 2, p. 288. Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 189. al-Khamees, *Tarikh*, Vol. 3, p. 333. Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*. al-Tibrisi, *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda*, p. 888. Muhammed ibn Ahmed ibn Ali al-Nishapuri, *Rawdat al-Waizeen*, p. 662. Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Al-Manaqib*, Vol. 2, p. 224.

3 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 75. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 41.

4 *Al-athar al-Baqiya*, p. 329.

over the doors of their houses.[1]

THE SEVERED HEADS

Ibn Sa'd ordered the heads to be severed from their bodies. They were distributed to various tribes that used them as means to seek favour with Ibn Ziyad. The Kindah tribe took thirteen brought by their envoy Qays ibn al-Ash'ath. The Hawazin tribe brought twelve with their "man" Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan. The Tameem tribe brought seventeen; the Banu Asad tribe brought sixteen; the Mathhaj tribe brought seven, and the other tribes brought the rest[2]. The tribe to which al-Hurr al-Riyahi belonged refused to cut anyone's head or to let their horses trample on the Imam's body[3].

On the tenth day, Ibn Sa'd had already entrusted the head of Imam al-Husain (ع) to Khawli ibn Yazid al-Asbahi and Hameed ibn Muslim al-Azdi. He entrusted the heads of the Imam's family members and those of his companions to al-Shimr, Qays ibn al-Ash'ath and Amr ibn al-Hajjaj[4]. Khawli's house was one farasang from Kufa. He hid the head from his Ansari wife whom he knew to be loyal to Ahl al-Bayt, peace be with them. But when she saw a light emanating from the bakery oven [where it was hidden], she was terrified. When she came closer, she heard the voices of al-Husain's women mourning al-Husain (ع) in the most somber way. She mentioned this to her husband then went out crying[5]. Since then, she never used any kohl nor any perfume out of her

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1 al-Karakchi, *Kitab al-Taajjub*, p. 46.

2 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 81. Al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari fi Sharh al-Bukhari*, Vol. 7, p. 656, where the name of Urwah ibn Qays is included among them.

3 Al-Hajj Shaikh Muhammed Baqir ibn Mawla Hasan al-Qa'ini al-Birjandi al-Safi, *Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar fi Shara'it Ahl al-Minbar*.

4 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*.

5 Muhammed al-Nishapuri, *Rawdat al-Shuhada'*. On p. 190, Vol. 8, Ibn Katheer says that his wife saw the light emanating from underneath the lid and stretching to the heavens as white birds kept hovering around it. He adds saying that his other wife, Nuwar daughter of Malik, said to him, "Have you

grief for al-Husain (ع). She was called Ayoof[1].

In the morning, Khawli took the head to the governor's mansion. By then, Ibn Ziyad had returned from his camp at al-Nakheela. Khawli put the head in front of Ibn Ziyad as he recited these poetic verses:

[illegible]

فساء ابن زياد قوله أمام الجمع فقال له : إذا علمت إنّه كذلك فلِمَ قتلته ؟ والله لا نلت منّي شيئاً.

Fill my stirrup with silver or with gold:
I killed the master of every honour told,
Their best when they mention descent.
I killed the best of people, son of the best parent.

But these words, spoken in front of everyone, were met by Ibn Ziyad with outrage. "Since you knew that he was that honourable," said Ibn Ziyad, "why did you then take part in killing him? By Allah, you will receive nothing from me at all."[2]

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brought the head of the son of the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah and His blessings upon him and his family, here?! I shall never share a bed with you henceforth." She separated from him.

1 al-Balathiri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, Vol. 5, p. 238.

2 According to p. 133, Vol. 1, of al-Yafii's book *Mir'at al-Jinan*, Ibn Ziyad was very angry with him, so he killed him, but the author does not identify the name of the head bearer. On p. 213, Vol. 2, of *Al-Iqd al-Farid fi Marifat al-Qira'a wal Tajwad* of Sayyid Muhammed Rida ibn Abul-Qasim ibn FathAllah ibn Nejm ad-Din al-Husaini al-Kamali al-Asterbadi al-Hilli (died in 1346 A.H./1927 A.D.), the head bearer is identified as Khawli ibn Yazid al-Asbahi who was killed by Ibn Ziyad. Historians contend among themselves about who had brought the head and who had said the above verses. According to Ibn Jarir at-Tabari, who indicates so on p. 261, Vol. 6, of his *Tarikh*, and Ibn al-Atheer who states so on p. 33, Vol. 4, of his book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, the poet was Sinan ibn Anas who recited them to Omer ibn

LEAVING KERBALA'

When Ibn Sa'd sent the heads to Kufa, he remained with the army till noon on the eleventh day [of Muharram]. He gathered those killed from his army and performed the funeral prayers for them then buried them, leaving the corpses of the Master of the Youths of Paraidse (ع) and those of his Ahl al-Bayt (ع) and companions unwashed, unshrouded, and unburied[1], exposed to the wind and to the wild beasts of the desert.

Sa'd. On p. 144 of *Tathkirat al-Khawass* of Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson, Omer said to him, "You are insane! Had Ibn Ziyad heard you, he would have killed you!" On p. 193, Vol. 1, of al-Sharishi's *Maqamat*, the author says that the poet recited them to Ibn Ziyad. According to al-Irbili's *Kashf al-Ghumma* and al-Khawarizmi's p. 40, Vol. 2, of *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Bishr ibn Malik recited them to Ibn Ziyad. On p. 76 of Ibn Talhah's *Matalib al-Saool*, there is the addition of "... and whoever says his prayers in both Qiblas," whereupon Ibn Ziyad became very angry with him and had him beheaded. On p. 437 of *Riyad al-Musa'ib*, it is stated that al-Shimr is the one who recited these verses. Since you know that al-Shimr is al-Husain's killer according to the text of the *ziyarat* of the sacred area and according to a host of historians, you likewise know that he must be the one who recited them. It is very unlikely that he kills him and lets someone else take the head and use it to seek favour with Ibn Ziyad. We have mentioned the story from Khawli only to follow in the footsteps of those who wrote about the Imam's martyrdom.

1 al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 39.

al-Majlisi

After the time of zawal, Ibn Sa'd left for Kufa with the women, the children, the bondmaids, and the surviving family members of al-Husain's companions. They included twenty women[1] whom they mounted on camels without saddles just as was the custom then with Turks or Romans taken captive although they belonged to the best of all prophets (ع). With them was as-Sajjad Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) who was twenty-three years old[2]. He was placed on a lean camel without a saddle, and he was worn out by sickness[3]. His son [the later Imam] al-Baqir[4], who was two years and a few months old[5], accompanied him. Among the children of Imam al-Hasan (ع) taken captive were: Zaid, Amr, and al-Hasan II. The latter was captured after he had killed seventeen men. He received eighteen wounds, and his right arm had been cut off. Asma' ibn Kharijah al-Fizari intervened to get him freed because his mother was also Fizari, so Ibn Sa'd left her husband take him[6]. With them was Uqbah ibn Saman, a slave of al-Rubab, al-

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1 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*, p. 204. On p. 234, Vol. 2, of al-Nawari's book *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* (first edition), both Shaikh al-Mufid and Sayyid Ibn Tawoos cite Imam al-Sadiq (ع) saying that he, peace be with him, had prayed two *rekats* at al-Qa'im, a place on the highway leading to al-Ghari (Najaf), then said, "Here was the head of my grandfather al-Husain (ع) placed when they went to Kerbala' then carried it to Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad." Then the Imam (ع) recited a supplication to be recited following the prayer saying, "This place is called al-Hananah."

2 Misab az-Zubairi, *Nasab Quraish*, p. 58.

3 Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Iqbal*, p. 54.

4 Muhammed Hasan al-Shaban Kurdi al-Qazwini, *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 49. al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*, p. 143.

5 al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*, p. 143 (Najaf edition). According to p. 203, Vol. 1, of Abul-Fida''s *Tarikh*, Vol. 1, p. 203, he was three years old.

6 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, in the chapter discussing the offspring of Imam al-Hasan (ع). According to p. 28 of *Isaf al-Raghibeen*, commenting on a footnote in *Nar al-Absar*, and also according to p. 8 of *Al-Luhuf* by Ibn Tawoos, he treated him at Kufa, and when he healed, he transported him to Medina.

Husain's wife. When Ibn Ziyad came to know that that man was al-Rubab's slave, he released him. Ibn Ziyad was informed that al-Muraqqa ibn Thumamah al-Asadi had scattered his arrows around then fled to his tribe where he sought and received protection, he ordered him to be banished to al-Zara[1].

The ladies pleaded to thus: "For the love of Allah! Please take us to those killed." When they saw how they had lost their limbs, how the spears had drank of their blood, and how the horses had trampled upon ,them, they screamed and beat their faces in anguish[2]. Zainab cried out **يـا محمّـداه ! هـذا حسـين بـالعراء ، مرمّـل بالـدماء ، مقطّـع**

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1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 261. Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 33. According to p. 367, Vol. 4, of Yaqat al-Hamawi's *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, al-Zara is a village in Bahrain, and there is another in West Tripoli as well as another in the upper Delta of the Nile. According to p. 692, Vol. 2, of al-Bikri's book *Al-Mu'jam mimma Istajam*, it is a place in the Bahrain area where wars waged by al-Numan ibn al-Munthir, who was nicknamed al-Gharoor (the conceited one), battled al-Aswaris. It also is a city in Persia where a duel took place between al-Bara' ibn Malik and the city's satrap, al-Bara' killed the latter and cut his hand off. He took his belt and both his bracelets the value of which was thirty thousand dinars. Omer ibn al-Khattab took the *khums* of the loot, and that was the first time in the history of Islam that a loot was taxed by 1/5 and delivered to the caliph (whereas it was/is supposed to be given to the Prophet's descendants according to the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an). On p. 10, Vol. 4, of his book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Ibn al-Atheer says that Ibn Ziyad threatened to banish the people of Kufa [who refused to fight al-Husain (ع)] to Oman's Zara. Also on p. 86, Vol. 8, where the events of the year 321 A.H./933 A.D. are discussed, it is stated that Ali ibn Yaleeq ordered Mu'awiyah and his son Yazid to be cursed from the pulpits in Baghdad, whereupon the Sunnis were outraged. There, al-Barbahari, a Hanbalite, used to stir trouble; he ran away from Ali ibn Yaleeq. The latter captured al-Barbahari's followers and shipped them in a boat to Oman. It appears from the latter account that Zara is a place in Oman. On p. 256 of al-Dainuri's book *Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, Ibn Ziyad banished al-Muraqqa to al-Zabada where the latter stayed till Yazid's death and Ibn Ziyad's flight to Syria. Al-Muraqqa, therefore, left it and went back to Kufa. On p. 9, Vol. 8, of *Nashwar al-Muhadara wa Akhbar al-Muthakara* by al-Tanakhi, the judge, namely Muhsin ibn Ali ibn Muhammed Abul-Fahm (329 - 384 A.H./941 - 994 A.D.), it is stated that Muhammed al-Muhallabi banished Muhammed ibn al-Hasan ibn Abdul-Aziz al-Hashimi to Oman in a boat because of something he had done which angered him.

الأعضاء ، وبناتك سبايا ، وذريّتك مقتّلة . فأبكت كلّ عدو وصديق"
O Muhammed! Here is al-Husain in the desert covered with blood, his limbs cut off! Here are your daughters taken captive and your offspring slaughtered!" These words caused friends and foes alike to weep[1], even the horses' tears ran on their hooves[2]. Then she put her hands under his sacred body and lifted it as she supplicated saying, "O Lord! Do accept this sacrifice from us".[3]

Sukayna[4] hugged the body of her father al-Husain (ع) and kept telling

2 Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 41. Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 74. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 39. Al-Turayhi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, p. 332.

1 al-Maqrazi, *Khutat*, Vol. 2, p. 280. According to the authors of both *Maqtal al-Husain (□)* and *Al-Luhuf*, the mourning was even on a much larger scale.

2 al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 39. Shaikh LutfAllah ibn al-Mawla Muhammed Jawad al-Safi al-Gulpaigani, *Al-Muntakhab al-Athar fi Akhbar al-Imam al-Thani Ashar* (usually referred to as simply *Al-Muntakhab*), p. 332.

3 al-Birjandi al-Safi, *Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar*, Vol. 3, p. 13, citing *Al-Tiraz al-Muthahhab*.

4 According to p. 163, Vol. 1, of al-Nawawi's *Tahthib al-Asma'*, p. 58, Vol. 1, of Shaikh Muhammed Ali ibn Ghanim al-Qatari al-Biladi al-Bahrani's book *Al-Kawakib al-Durriyya*, p. 160 of al-Shiblinji's *Nar al-Absar*, and Ibn Khallikan's *Wafiyyat al-Ayan*, where the author details her biography, Sukayna daughter of al-Husain (ع) died on a Thursday, Rabi' I 5, 117 A.H./April 8, 735 A.D. According to Abul-Hasan al-Amri's book *Al-Mujdi* and to al-Tibrisi's book *Alam al-Wara bi Alam al-Huda*, p. 127, where the biographies of the offspring of Imam al-Hasan (ع) are discussed, and also according to p. 163, Vol. 12, of Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani's book *Al-Aghani*, she married her cousin Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who was killed during the Battle of al-Taff. She did not bear any children by him. But the author *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda*, namely al-Tibrisi, says that he was killed before marrying her, and that during the Battle of al-Taff, she was a little more than ten years old, and that she was born before the the death [martyrdom] of her uncle Imam al-Hasan (ع). The statement in her honour

him how she had heard him saying,

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O my Shi'as! Whenever of water you drink
Never from mentioning my name should you shrink.
And whenever you are a stranger on a sojourn
Or see a martyr, me should you remember and mourn.[1]

Only a number of them could collectively remove her from his corpse, forcefully dragging her away.[2]

When Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) looked at his slaughtered family, he felt greatly grieved and worried. When his sister Zainab al-Kubra read his face, she felt upset on his account and took to consoling him and admonishing him to be patient although even the mountains could not match him in his patience and fortitude. Among what she said to him is the following:

ما لي أراك تجود بنفسك يا بقيّة جدّي وأبي وإخوتي؟ فـوالله إنّ هذا لعهد من الله إلى جدّك وأبيك ، ولقد أخذ اللـه ميثـاق أُناس لا تعرفهم فراعنـة هـذه الأرض ، وهـم معروفـون فـي أهـل السّـماوات ، إنّهـم يجمعـون هـذه الأعضـاء المقطّعـة والجسوم المضرّجة ، فيوارونها وينصبون بهـذا الطـفّ علمـاً لقبر أبيك سيّد الشهداء لا يُدرس أثره ولا يُمحى رسمه علـى كرور الليالي والأيّام ، وليجتهدنّ أئمّة الكفر وأشـياع الضـلال في محوه وتطميسه ، فلا يزداد أثره إلاّ علوّاً.

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made by the Master of Martyrs (ع), "Sukayna is overcome by deep contemplation upon Allah," as is recorded by al-Sabban in his book *Isaf al-Raghibeen*, clearly outlines for us the status his daughter occupied in the sacred canons of Islam's *Sharaa*.

1 These verses are recorded on p. 376 of the Indian edition of *Misbah al-Kaf'ami*.

2 al-Qazwini, *Tazallum al-Zahra'*, p. 135.

"Why do I see you pleading for death, O the legacy of my grandfather, of my father and brothers? By Allah, this is something which Allah had divulged to your grandfather (ع) and to your father (ع). Allah took a covenant from people whom you do not know, the mighty ones on this land, and who are known to the people of the heavens, that they would gather these severed parts and wounded corpses and bury them, then shall they set up on this Taff a banner for the grave of your father, the Master of Martyrs (ع), the traces of which shall never be obliterated, nor shall it ever be wiped out so long as there is day and night. And the leaders of apostasy and the promoters of misguidance shall try their best to obliterate and efface it, yet it shall get more and more lofty instead."[1]

Zajr ibn Qays came to them and shouted at them to leave as he kept whipping them. Others surrounded them and mounted them on camel humps.[2]

Zainab the wise rode her own she-camel. She recollected the days of lofty honour and inviolable prestige, guarded by fierce and honourable lions of Abdul-Muttalib's offspring. And she used to always be surrounded by servants who would not enter without her permission.

AT KUFA

When the daughters of the Commander of the Faithful (ع) entered Kufa, the city's residents gathered to see them, so Umm Kulthum shouted at them, "O people of Kufa! Do not you have any sense of shame before Allah and His Messenger so you look at the ladies of the Prophet?"[3]

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1 Shaikh Abul-Qasim Ja'far ibn Muhammed ibn Ja'far ibn Musa ibn Qawlawayh al-Qummi (died in 367 A.H./977 A.D.), *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, p. 361, chapter 88, virtues of Kerbala' and merits of viziting the grave site of al-Husain (ع).

2 Radiyy ad-Din ibn Nabi al-Qazwini (died in 1134 A.H./1722 A.D.), *Tazallum al-Zahra'*, p. 177.

3 Muhammed Jawad Shubbar, *Al-Damah al-Sakibah*, p. 364.

One of Kufa's women came to them and saw their condition for which even a most bitter enemy would feel sorry. She asked them what captives they were, and she was told: "We are captives belonging to the Progeny of Muhammed."[1] The people of Kufa kept doling out dates, walnuts and bread to the children, whereupon Umm Kulthum, that is, Zainab al-Kubra, shouted at them that they were prohibited from accepting charity. She threw away what had been given to the children[2]. A poet once composed these lines addressing Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع):

O father of Hasan!
She overlooks and in the slumber she delights,
But only with her hand can Zainab now cover her face.
O father of Hasan!
Does this sight you please:
Each of your women chained, uncovered the face,
While Banu Harb's women in their chambers veiled with grace?
Does your side on the bed find comfort and ease,
While your daughters on the camels to Syria are brought?
Are you pleased when your wise ladies are exposed?
With lashes they are whipped when they cry, having no rest..
To the east they are once taken by the mean gangs, the worst,
And once towards the land of shame are taken, to the west.
None to protect them as they cross every plain,
None heeds their complaints when they complain.
Their voices were lost and their hearts squeezed,
Their breath by grief is almost snatched away
Amazed am I about one who thinks of fate
And wonders and upon it does he contemplate:
A fornicator leisurely turns about on his throne,
As al-Husain on the ground is left, unburied, alone,
And his head is on a lance openly carried,
And with the crown is crowned the son of a whore.

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1 Ibn Nama, p. 84. *Al-Luhuf*, p. 81.

2 al-Rashti al-Ha'iri, *Asrar al-Shahada*, p. 477. Al-Qazwini, *Tazallum al-Zahra'*, p. 150.

For three days did Husain stay unburied or more.
One's body is to cruel elements is left exposed
As the other covers his with silk and with gold.[1]

ZAINAB'S SPEECH

The daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (ع) explained to people Ibn Ziyad's villainy and meanness in a speech which she delivered to them. When she signaled to them to calm down, they did. They stood speechless and motionless, and even the bells of their animals stopped ringing. It was then that she, calm and composed and with courage reminiscent of that of her father Haider (ع) addressed them saying,

يقول الراوي : لمّا أومأت زينب ابنة علي (ع) إلى النّاس ، فسكنت الأنفاس والأجراس ، فعندها اندفعت بخطابها مع طمأنينة نفس وثبات جأش ، وشجاعة حيدريّة ، فقالت (ص) لوات الله عليها: الحمد لله والصلاة على أبي محمّد وآله الطيّبين الأخيار .

شيخ الطائفة

أمّا بعد ، يا أهل الكوفة ، يا أهل الختل والغدر ، أتبكون ؟! فلا رقأت الدمعة ، ولا هدأت الرنّة ، إنّما مثَلكم كمثَل التي نقضت غزلها من بعد قوّة أنكاثاً ، تتّخذون أيمانكم دخلاً بينكم ، ألا وهل فيكم إلاّ الصلف النطف والعجب والكذب والشنف وملق الإماء، وغمز الأعداء؟! أو كمرعى على دمنة أو كقصّة على ملحودة، ألا بئس ما قدّمتْ لكم أنفسكم أنْ سخط الله عليكم ، وفي العذاب أنتم خالدون .

أتبكون وتنتحبون ؟! إي والله فابكوا كثيراً ، واضحكوا قليلاً ؛ فلقد ذهبتم بعارها وشنارها ، ولن ترحضوها بغسل بعدها أبداً ، وأنّى ترحضون قتْل سليل خاتم النبوّة ومعدن الرسالة ، ومدرة حجّتكم ومنارمحَجّتكم ، وملاذ خيرتكم

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1 Excerpted from a poem in praise of al-Husain (as) by Shaikh Hassoon al-Hilli who died in 1305 A.H./1888 A.D. as we are told on p. 155, Vol. 2, of *Shuara' al-Hilla*.

ومفـزع نـازلتكم ، وسـيّد شـباب أهـل الجنّـة ، ألا سـاء مـا تزرون .

فتعساً و نكساً وبُعداً لكم وسحقاً ، فلقد خـاب السّـعي وتبّـت الأيدي ، وخسرت الصفقة ، وبؤتم بغضب من الله ورسـوله ، وضُـربت عليكـم الذلّـة والمسـكنة. ويلكـم يـا أهـل الكوفـة ، أتدرون أيّ كبد لرسول الله فريتم ؟ وأيّ كريمة لـه أبرزتـم ؟ وأيّ دم له سفكتم ؟ وأيّ حرمة له انتهكتم ؟ لقد جئتم شـيئاً إدّاً ، تكـاد السّـموات يتفطّـرن منـه ، وتنشـقّ الأرض ، وتخـرّ الجبـال هـدّاً . ولقـد أتيتـم بهـا خرقـاء شـوهاء كطلاع الأرض وملء السّماء .

أفعجبتم أنْ مطرت السّماء دماً ولعذاب الآخرة أخزى وهـم لا يُنصرون ، فلا يستخفنّكم المهل ، فإنّه لا يحفـزه البـدار ، ولا يخاف فوت الثار ، وإنّ ربّكم لَبِالمرصاد.

All Praise is due to Allah. Peace and blessings be upon my father Muhammed (ص) and upon his good and righteous Progeny (ع). May the resounding [of this calamity] never stops. Your similitude is one who unspins what is already spun out of the desire to violate [a trust]. You make religion a source of your income... Is there anyone among you who is not a boaster of what he does not have, a charger of debauchery, a conceited liar, a man of grudge without any justification, one submissive like bondmaids, an instigater, a pasture of what is not wholesome, a reciter of a story to someone buried? Truly bad is that which your souls have committed. You have reaped the Wrath of Allah, remaining in the chastisement for eternity. Do you really cry and sob? By Allah, you should then cry a great deal and laugh very little, for you have earned nothing but shame and infamy, and you shall never be able to wash it away, and how could you do so? The descendant of the Bearer of the Last Message (ع), the very essence of the Message, the source of your security and the beacon of your guidance, the refuge of the righteous from among you, the one who saves you from calamity, the Master of the Youths of Paradise... is killed. O how horrible is the sin that you bear...! Miserable you are and renegades from the path of righteousness; may you be distanced and crushed. The effort is rendered futile, the toil is ruined, the deal is lost, and you earned nothing but Wrath from Allah and His Messenger (ع). You are doomed

with servitude and humiliation. Woe unto you, O Kufians! Do you know whose heart you have burned, what a "feat" you have laboured, what blood you have shed, and what sanctity you have violated? You have done a most monstrous deed, something for which the heavens are about to split asunder and so is the earth, and for which the mountains crumble. You have done something most uncanny, most defaced, as much as the fill of the earth and of the sky. Do you wonder why the sky rains blood? Surely the torment of the hereafter is a greater chastisement, and they shall not be helped. Let no respite elate you, for rushing does not speed it up, nor does it fear the loss of the opportunity for revenge. Your Lord is waiting in ambush for you.[1]

Imam as-Sajjad (ع) said to her, "That is enough, O aunt, for you are, Praise to Allah, a learned lady whom none taught, one who comprehends without being made to do so."[2]

FATIMA DELIVERS A SPEECH

Fatima, al-Husain's daughter[3], delivered a speech wherein she said,

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1 This speech is compiled from the writings of Shaikh at-Tusi in his *Aamali* as well as that of his son, from *Al-Luhuf*, Ibn Nama, Ibn Shahr Ashub, and from al-Tibrisi's book *Al-Ihtijaj*.

2 al-Tibrisi, *Al-Ihtijaj*, p. 166 (Najaf's edition).

3 Fatima daughter of al-Husain (ع), peace be with him, was a great personality; she enjoyed a great status in the creed. Her father, the Master of Martyrs, testifies to this fact. When al-Hasan II approached him asking him for the hand of either of his two daughters, he, peace be with him, as we are told on p. 202 of *Nar al-Absar*, said to him, "I choose for you Fatima, for she, more than anyone else, is like my mother Fatima daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ع). As far as the creed is concerned, she stays awake all night long offering prayers, and the daytime she spends fasting. In beauty, she looks like the *huris* with large lovely eyes." On p. 442, Vol. 12, of Ibn Hajar's *Tahthib al-Tahthib*, she is said to have narrated *hadith* from her father, brother Zain al-Abidin, aunt Zainab, Ibn Abbas, and Asma' daughter of Umays. Her sons Abdullah, Ibrahim, al-Husain (ع), and her daughter Umm Ja'far, offspring of al-Hasan II, quote her *hadith*. Abul-Miqdam quotes her *hadith* through his mother. Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah quotes her *hadith* through his mother. On p. 425 of *Khulasat Tahtheeb al-Kamal*, it is stated that the authors of *sunan*

الحمد لله عدد الرمل والحصى ، وزنة العرش إلى الثرى ، أحمده وأُؤمن به وأتوكّل عليه ، وأشهد أنْ لا إله إلاّ الله وحده لا شريك له وأنّ محمداً عبده ورسوله ، وأنّ أولاده ذُبحوا بشطّ الفرات ، من غير ذحل ولا ترات .

اللهمّ إنّي أعوذ بك أنْ أفتري عليك ، وأنْ أقول عليك خلاف ما أنزلت من أخذ العهود والوصيّة لعلي بن أبي طالب المغلوب حقّه ، المقتول من غير ذنب كما قُتل ولده بالأمس ، في بيت من بيوت الله تعالى ، فيه معشر مسلمة بألسنتهم ، تعساً لرؤوسهم ما دفعت عنه ضيماً في حياته ولا عند مماته ، حتّى قبضه الله تعالى إليه محمود النّقيبة طيّب العريكة ، معروف المناقب مشهور المذاهب ، لَم تأخذه في الله سبحانه لَومة لائم ولا عذل عاذل ، هديته اللهمّ للإسلام صغيراً ، وحمدت مناقبه كبيراً ، ولَم يزل ناصحاً لك ولرسولك ، زاهداً في الدنيا غير حريص عليها ، راغباً في الآخرة ، مجاهداً لك في سبيلك ، رضيته فاخترته وهديته إلى صراط

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books, including al-Tirmithi, Abu Dawud, and al-Nassa'i, have all quoted her *ahadith*. So does the author of *Musnad Ali*. Ibn Majah al-Qazwini does likewise. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani says, "She is mentioned in the book of funerals in Bukhari's *Sahih*, and Ibn Haban holds her reliable, adding that she died in 110 A.H./729 A.D." So do both authors al-Yafii, on p. 234, Vol. 1, of his book *Mir'at al-Jinan*, and Ibn al-Imad on p. 39, Vol. 1, of his book *Shatharat*. Based on what Ibn Hajar says in his book *Tahthib al-Tahthib*, she must have lived for almost ninety years, placing her year of birth at about 30 A.H./651 A.D. Hence, she must have been almost thirty years old during the Battle of al-Taff. She died seven years before her sister Sukayna. On p. 35, Vol. 4, of Ibn al-Atheer's book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, and also according to p. 267, Vol. 6, of at-Tabari's *Tarikh*, Fatima was older than her sister Sukayna. On p. 18 of *Tahqiq al-Nusra ila Maalim Dar al-Hijra* by Abu Bakr ibn Husain ibn Omer al-Maraghi (d. 816 A.H./1414 A.D.), one of the signs of her lofty status with Allah is that when al-Walid ibn Abdul-Malik ordered to deposit the relics at the mosque, Fatima daughter of al-Husain (ع) went out to al-Harra where she had a house built for her. Then she ordered a well to be dug up; moutain stone appeared in it, and she was informed of it. She made her ablution then sprinkled the leftover water on it. After that, it was not difficult at all to dig that well. People used to seek blessings through the use of its water, and they named it "Zamzam". On p. 474, Vol. 8, of Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat* (Sadir's edition), Fatima daughter of al-Husain (ع) used to use knots on a string as her rosary beads.

مستقيم .

أمّا بعد، يا أهل الكوفة ، يا أهل المكر والغـدر والخيلاء ، فإنّـا أهل بيت ابتلانا الله بكم ، وابتلاكم بنا . فجعل بلاءنـا حسـناً ، وجعل علمه عندنا وفهمه لدنيا ، فنحـن عَيبـة علمـه ، ووعـاء فهمه وحكمته ، وحجّته على الأرض في بلاده لعباده ، أكرمنـا الله بكرامته ، وفضّلنا بنبيّه محمّد (صلّى الله عليه وآله) على كثير ممَّن خلق الله تفضيلاً ، فكذّبتمونا وكفّرتمونـا ، ورأيتـم قتالنا حلالاً ، وأموالنـا نهبـاً ، كأنّنـا أولاد تـرك أو كابـل ، كمـا قتلتم جدّنا بالأمس ، وسيوفكم تقطر من دمائنا أهـل الـبيت لحقد متقدّم ، قرّت لذلك عيـونكم ، وفرحـت قلبـوكم افـتراءً على الله ومكراً مكرتم، واللـه خيـر المـاكرين ، فلا تـدعوتّكم أنفسكم إلى الجذل بما أصبتم من دمائنا ، ونالت أيديكم مـن أموالنـا ، فـإنّ مـا أصـابنا مـن المصـائب الجليلـة ، والرزايـا العظيمة في كتاب مـن قبـل أن نبرأهـا ، إنّ ذلـك علـى اللـه يسير ؛ لكيلا تأسـوا علـى مـا فـاتكم ولا تفرحـوا بمـا آتـاكم ، والله لا يحبّ كلّ مختال فخور .

تبّاً لكم فانظروا اللعنة والعذاب ، فكأنّ قد حلّ بكم وتـواترت من السّماء نقمات ، فيسـحتكم بعـذاب ويـذيق بعضـكم بـأس بعـض ، ثـمّ تخلـدون فـي العـذاب الأليـم يـوم القيامـة ؛ بمـا ظلمتمونا ، ألا لعنة الله على الظالمين .

ويلكم ! أتدرون أيّة يد طاعنتنا منكم ؟ وأيّة نفس نزعت إلـى قتالنا ؟ أم بأيّة رِجل مشيتم إلينا ؟ تبغـون محاربتنـا ، قسـت قلوبكم وغلظت أكبـادكم وطبـع اللـه علـى أفئدتكـم ، وختـم على سمعكم وبصـركم وسـوّل لكـم الشـيطان وأملـى لكـم ، وجعل على بصركم غشاوة فأنتم لا تهتدون .

تبّاً لكم يا أهل الكوفة ، أيّ ترات لرسول الله قِبلَكم ، وذحول له لديكم ؟ بما عندتم بأخيه على بن أبي الطالب جـدّي وبنيـه وعترته الطيّبين الأخيار ، وافتخر بذلك مفتخركم:

[illegible]

بفيك أيها القائل الكثكث والأثلب؛ افتخرت بقتل قوم زكّاهم

الله وطهّرهم وأذهب عنهم الرجس، فأكضم وأقع كما أقعى أبوك فإنّما لكلّ امرىء ما اكتسب وما قدّمت يداه .

حسدتمونا، ويلاً لكم، على ما فضّلنا الله تعالى ، ذلك فضل الله يؤتيه مَن يشاء والله ذوالفضل العظيم . ومَن لَم يجعل الله له نوراً فما له من نور .

فارتفعت الأصوات بالبكاء والنّحيب وقالوا : حسبكِ يا ابنة الطاهرين فقد حرقت قلوبنا وأنضجت نحورنا وأضرمت أجوافنا ، فسكتت .

"All Praise is due to Allah, as much as the number of the sands and of the stones, as much as the Arsh weighs up to the ground. I praise Him, believe in Him, and rely upon Him, and I testify that there is no Allah other than Allah, the One and Only Allah, there is no partner with Him, and that Muhammed is His servant and Messenger, and that his offspring have been slaughtered by the Euphrates river neither on account of blood revenge nor out of dispute over inheritance. Lord! I seek refuge with You against telling a lie about You and against saying anything contrary to what You have revealed of taking many a covenant regarding the vicegerency of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the man whose right is confiscated, who was killed without having committed a sin, just as his son was only yesterday killed, at one of the houses of Allah, the most Exalted One, at the hand of those who give Islam nothing but lip service. Destruction may afflict their heads that did not ward off from him any injustice as long as he lived nor at his death, till Allah Almighty took his soul to Him while his essence was praised, his dealing with others was commendable, his merits were well known, and his beliefs well admitted by everyone. Never did he ever accept anyone’s blame nor the criticism of any critic in doing what is right. Lord! You guided him to Islam even when he was a child and praised his virtues when he grew up. Never did he ever cease enjoining others to follow Your Path and that of Your Messenger (ع). He always paid no heed to the riches of this world. He always desired the hereafter, a man who carried out jihad for Your Cause. With him were You pleased, so You chose him and guided him to a Straight Path. O people of Kufa! O people of treachery, of betrayal and conceit! We are members of a Household tried on your account by Allah, afflicted by you. He made

our dealing with you good, and He entrusted His knowledge to us, and He bestowed upon us its comprehension; so, we are the bastian of His knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and His Arguments on the earth which He created for the good of His servants! Allah bestowed upon us His blessings and greatly honoured us with His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his Progeny, favouring us over many of those whom He created. Yet you called us liars and apostates, and in your eyes you deemed killing us as lawful, and so is looting our possessions, as if we were the offspring of the Turks or of Kabul, just as you killed our grandfather in the past. Your swords drip with our blood, the blood of Ahl al-Bayt, out of past animosity. Thus have your eyes been cooled, and thus have your hearts been elated, telling lies about Allah and out of evil plans which you hatched, while Allah is the very best of planners. So do not be carried away with your excitement because of our blood which you have spilled or our wealth which you have snatched, for what has befallen us is truly a great tragedy and a momentous calamity "In a Book even before We created them; surely this is easy for Allah, so that you may not be grieved because of what you missed nor feel happy because of what you acquired, and Allah does not love anyone who is coceited, braggard" (57:23). May you be ruined! Expect to be cursed and to be tormented, for it seems as though it has already befallen you, and more and more signs of Wrath are on their way to you from the heavens till He makes you taste of the chastisement and make some of you taste of the might of others, then on the Day of Judgment shall you all remain for eternity in the painful torment on account of the injustice with which you have treated us; the curse of Allah be upon the oppressors. Woe unto you! Do you know what hand you have stabbed, what soul found fighting us agreeable? Rather, by what feet did you walk towards us with the intention to fight us? Your hearts became hardened, and Allah sealed your hearts, your hearing, and your vision, and Satan inspired to you and dictated, placing a veil over your eyes, so you can never be guided. Destruction is your lot, O people of Kufa! What a legacy of the Prophet (ص) is standing before you, and what blood revenge will he seek from you on account of your enmity towards his brother Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), my grandfather, and towards his good and righteous offspring, yet you even brag about it saying,

نحن قتلنا عليا و بني علي
بسيوف هندية و رماح
و سبينا نساءهم سبي ترك
و نطحناهم فأي نطاح

We killed Ali and Ali's sons,
With Indian swords and spears
And we placed their women in captivity
Like the Turks! We crushed them with severity.

May stones and pebbles fill your mouths! You brag about killing people whom Allah chose and whom He purified with a perfect purification and from whom He kept away all abomination. Suppress it, then, and squat just as your fathers did, for each will get the rewards of what he earns and will be punished for what he committed. You envied us, woe unto you, for what Allah, the most Exalted One, favoured and preferred us. Such is Allah's favour: He bestows His favours upon whomsoever He pleases, and surely with Allah are great favours. For whoever Allah does not make a noor, he shall have no light at all."

Voices were raised with weeping and wailing, and they said to her, "Enough, enough, O daughter of the pure ones, for you have burnt our hearts and necks," so she took to silence.

AL-SAJJAD DELIVERS A SPEECH

Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) was brought on a lean camel. Chains were placed on his neck, and he was handcuffed. Both sides of his neck were bleeding. He was repeating these verses:

O nation of evil, may your quarter never tastes of water!
O nation that never honoured in our regard our Grandfather!
Should we and the Messenger of Allah meet
On the Judgment Day, how would you then plead?
On bare beasts of burden have you
Transported us, as if we never put up a creed for you!

He signaled to people to be silent. Once they were silent, he praised Allah and glorified Him and saluted the Prophet (ص). Then he said,

أيّها النّاس ، مَن عرفني فقد عرفني ، ومَن لَم يعرفني فأنا علي بن الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب ، أنا ابن من انتُهكت حرمته ، وسُلبت نعمته وانتهب ماله ، وسُبي عياله ، أنا ابن المذبوح بشطّ الفرات من غير ذحل ولا ترات ، أنا ابن من قُتل صبراً ، وكفى بذلك فخراً .

أيّها النّاس ناشدتكم الله هل تعلمون أنّكم كتبتم إلى أبي وخدعتموه وأعطيتموه من أنفسكم العهود والميثاق والبيعة ، وقاتلتموه ؟

فتّباً لكم لِما قدّمتم لأنفسكم ، وسوأة لرأيكم ، بأيّة عين تنظرون إلى رسول الله ؟ إذ يقول لكم : قتلتم عترتي ، وانتهكتم حرمتي ، فلستم من أُمّتي.

فارتفعت الأصوات بالبكاء وقالوا : هلكتم وما تعلمون .

ثمّ قال عليه السّلام : (رحم الله امرءاً قبِل نصيحتي ، وحفظ وصيّتي في الله وفي رسوله وأهل بيته ، فإنّ لنا في رسول الله أُسوة حسنة.)

فقالوا بأجمعهم : نحن يابن رسول الله سامعون مطيعون حافظون لذمامك ، غير زاهدين فيك ، ولا راغبين عنك ، فمرنا بأمرك يرحمك الله ، فإنّا حرب لحربك ، وسِلم لسلمك ، نبرأ ممَّن ظلمك وظلمنا .

فقال عليه السّلام: هيهات هيهات، أيّها الغدرة المكرة ، حِيل بينكم وبين شهوات أنفسكم ، تريدون أن تأتوا إليَّ كما أتيتم إلى أبي من قبل ؟ كلاّ وربّ الراقصات ، فإنّ الجرح لمّا يندمل ، قُتل أبي بالأمس وأهل بيته ، ولَم ينس ثكل رسول الله وثكل أبي وبني أبي ، إنّ وجده والله لبين لهاتي ومرارته بين حناجري وحلقي ، وغصّته تجري في فراش صدري :

مهلاً بني حرب فما قد نالنا فبعين جبّار السّما لم يكتم
فكأنّني يوم الحساب بأحمد بالرسل يقدم حاسراً عن معصم
ويقول ويلكم هتكتم حرمتي

وتركتم الأسياف تنطف من دمي
تـــــــدرون أيّ دم أرقـــــــتم فـــــــي الـــــــثرى أمْ
أيَّ خـود سـقتُمُ في المغنم
أمـن الـعدالة صونكم فتياتكم وحـرائري تسبى كسبي الديلم
والـماء تـورده يـعافير الفلا وكـبود أطـفالي ظماء تضرم
تـــــالله لـــــو ظفـــــرت ســـــراة الكفـــــر فـــــي
رهطي لما ارتكبوا لذاك المعظم
يـا لـيت شعر محمّد ما فاتكم طـعن الحناجر بعد حزّ الغلصم

O people! Whoever recognizes me knows me, and whoever does not, let me tell him that I am Ali son of al-Husain (ع) ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). I am the son of the man whose sanctity has been violated, whose wealth has been plundered, whose children have been seized. I am the son of the one who has been slaughtered by the Euphrates neither out of blood revenge nor on account of an inheritance. I am the son of the one killed in the worst manner. This suffices me to be proud. O people! I plead to you in the Name of Allah: Do you not know that you wrote my father then deceived him? Did you not grant him your covenant, your promise, and your allegiance, then you fought him? May you be ruined for what you have committed against your own souls, and out of your corrupt views! Through what eyes will you look at the Messenger of Allah (ع) when he says to you, "You killed my Progeny, violated my sanctity, so you do not belong to my nation"?

Loud cries rose, and they said to each other, "You have perished, yet you are not aware of it." Then he, peace be with him, said, "May Allah have mercy on anyone who acts upon my advice, who safeguards my legacy with regard to Allah, His Messenger (ع), and his Ahl al-Bayt (ع), for we have in the Messenger of Allah (ع) a good example of conduct to emulate." They all said, "We, O son of the Messenger of Allah, hear and we obey, and we shall safeguard your trust. We shall not turn away from you, nor shall we disobey you; so, order us, may Allah have mercy on you, for we shall fight when you fight, and we shall seek asylum when you do so; we dissociate ourselves from whoever oppressed you and dealt unjustly with you." He, peace be with him, said, "Far, far away it is from you to do so, O people of treachery and conniving! You are separated from what you desire. Do you want to come to me as you did to my father saying, No, by the Lord of all

those [angels] that ascend and descend'?! The wound is yet to heal. My father was killed only yesterday, and so were his Ahl al-Bayt (ع), and the loss inflicted upon the Messenger of Allah (ع), upon my father (ع), and upon my family is yet to be forgotten. Its pain, by Allah, is between both of these [sides] and its bitterness is between my throat and palate. Its choke is resting in my very chest."[1]

THE BURIAL

Historians record saying that the Master of Martyrs (ع) set up a tent on the battlefield[2], ordering those killed from among his companions and Ahl al-Bayt (ع) to be carried to it. Whenever a fresh martyr was brought, he, peace be with him, would say, "You have been killed just as the prophets and the families of prophets are killed."[3] He did so to everyone with the exception of his brother al-Abbas, peace be with him, whom he left where he fell near the river bank of the Euphrates.

When Omer ibn Sa'd accompanied those whom he arrested of the custodians of the Message and left for Kufa, he left behind those who were described by the Commander of the Faithful (ع) as the masters of martyrs in the life of this world and in the hereafter, an honour to which nobody ever preceded nor will anyone suceed them[4], lying on the sands incinerated by the sun and sought by the wild beasts of the desert.

Among them was the Master of the Youths of Paradise who was in a condition that would split the hardest of the stones, yet divine lights were emanating from his corpse, and sweet scents were surrounding him from all directions.

A man belonging to Banu Asad has narrated the following:

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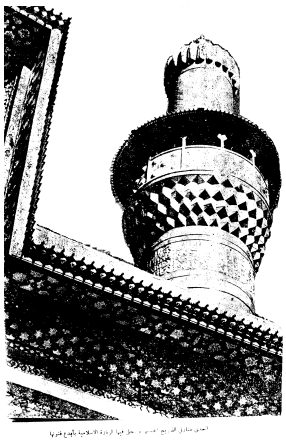
1 All these speeches are mentioned by Ibn Tawoos in his book *Al-Luhuf* and by Ibn Nama in his book *Muthir al-Ahzan*.

2 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 256. Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 30. Al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*.

3 This is narrated on p. 211, Vol. 10, and p. 125, Vol. 13, of al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* where al-Nu'mani's book *Al-Ghaiba* is cited.

4 al-Qummi, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, p. 219.

Once the army left, I came to the battlefield and saw light emanating from those corpses that were covered with blood and smelled sweet scents. I saw a terrifying lion walking between the amputated parts till he reached the embodiment of sanctity and the sacrifice of guidance. He rubbed himself on his blood and rubbed his body on his as he kept muttering and letting out a very strange sound. I was amazed. Never have I ever seen such a fierce lion abandon what would be for his likes nothing but a meal. I hid among the marshes and kept watching to see what else he would do. I was more amazed when midnight came. It was then that I saw candles with voices that filled the earth with painful cries and wailing.[5]



On the thirtheenth day of Muharram, Zain al-Abidin (ع) came to bury his martyred father, peace be with him, since only an Imam buries another Imam.[1]

When as-Sajjad (ع) came to the place, he saw Banu Asad assembled around the slain not knowing what to do. They could not identify the corpses especially since their killers had separated the heads from the bodies. Had it been otherwise, they could have inquired about them with the families and the tribes of those slain. But he, peace be with him, informed them that it was his task to bury those pure bodies. He informed them of the names of the slain, identifying those who belonged to Banu Hashim from the rest. Crying and wailing rose, and tears filled the eyes of everyone present there and then. The ladies of Banu Asad loosened their hair in grief and beat their cheeks.

Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) walked to his father's body, hugged it and wept loudly. Then he came to the grave-site and lifted a handful of its soil. A grave already dug appeared, and so did a pre-constructed shrine... He placed his hands under the Imam's back and said, "In the Name of Allah, and according to the creed of the Messenger of Allah. Allah has said the truth, and so has His Messenger (ع). The will of

5 al-Bahrani, *Madeenat al-Ma'ajiz*, p. 263, chapter 127.

1 al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*, p. 173.

Allah be done; there is neither power nor might except in Allah, the Great." Then he took it and went down without being assisted by anyone from among the Banu Asad to whom he said, "I have with me someone who will assist me." Once he laid it down in the grave, he put his cheek on his father's sacred neck and said, "Congratulations to the land that contains your pure body, for the world after you is dark whereas the hereafter in your light shall shine. As to the night, it is the harbinger of sleep, while grief remains forever, for Allah shall choose for your Ahl al-Bayt (ع) your abode wherein you shall abide. From me to you is Salam, O son of the Messenger of Allah, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings."

On the grave he wrote: "This is the grave of al-Husain son of Ali son of Abu Talib, the one whom they killed even as he was a thirsty stranger." Then he walked to the body of his uncle al-Abbas, peace be with him, and he saw him in a condition that had left the angels in the heavens' strata baffled and caused the huris to weep even as they were in the chambers of Paradise. He fell upon it kissing his sacred neck and saying, "May the world after you be obliterated, O moon of Banu

Hashim, and peace from me to you, O martyr, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings."

He dug a grave for him and took him down in it by himself just as he had done to the corpse of his martyred father (ع). He said to Banu Asad, "There is someone with me to help me."

Yes, he gave a piece of jewelry to Banu Asad as a token of appreciation for consoling him in burying the martyrs, and he assigned for them two places, ordering them to dig two pits in the first of which he buried those slain from Banu Hashim and in the second those slain from among the companions[1].

As regarding al-Hurr al-Riyahi, his corpse was taken away by his tribe that buried it where it now stands. It is said that his mother was present then and there, and when she saw what was being done to the corpses, she carried her son's corpse somewhere else.[2]

The closest in proximity to the grave of al-Husain (ع) from among the martyrs is his son Ali al-Akbar, peace be with him. In this regard,

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1 See *Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar fi Shara'it Ahl al-Minbar* by the narrator Shaikh Muhammed Baqir son of Mawla Hasan al-Qa'ini al-Birjandi al-Safi, *Asrar al-Shahada* by Sayyid Kazim ibn Qasim al-Rashti al-Ha'iri (died in 1259 A.H./1843 A.D.), and *Al-Iyqad*.

2 Al-Hajj Shaikh Muhammed Baqir al-Birjandi al-Safi, *Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar fi Shara'it Ahl al-Minbar*. On p. 344 of his book *Al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyya*, Sayyid al-Jaza'iri cites testimonials to this statement. He, for example, details how [sultan] Isma'eel al-Safawi [founder of the Safavid dynasty; he lived from 904 - 930 A.H./1499 - 1524 A.D. and ruled Iran from 907 - 930 A.H./1502 - 1524 A.D.] dug up the place, whereupon he saw the deceased as though he had just been killed; there was a bandage on his head. Once he untied it in person, blood started pouring out, and the bleeding did not stop till he tied it back again. He built a dome above the grave and assigned an attendant for it. So, when al-Nawari, in his book *Al-Lulu wal Marjan*, denies that he had been buried, he did not support his denial with any evidence at all. On p. 37, Vol. 1, of *Tuhfat al-Alim*, Sayyid Ja'far Bahr al-Ulum states that Hamid-Allah al-Mustawfi has indicated in his book *Nuzhat al-Quloob* saying that there is in Kerbala' the grave of al-Hurr [al-Riyahi] which is visited by people. He is al-Hurr's grandson up to 18 generations back.

Imam al-Sadiq (ع) says to Hammad al-Basri, "The father of Abdullah was killed a stranger away from home; he is mourned be whoever visits his grave-site, and whoever does not visit it grieves for him; whoever doe not see him is very depressed on account of being deprived of doing so, so he grieves; whoever sees the grave of his son at his feet in a desolate land, far away from his kins, invokes Allah's mercy for him because of the fact that he was not supported when he called upon people to uphold righteousness, and because the renegades assisted one another against him till they killed him and did not have any respect for him, so much so that they exposed his corpse to the wild beasts and prohibited him from drinking of the water of the Euphrates of which the dogs drink. They disregarded their obligations in his respect towards the Messenger of Allah (ع) who had enjoined them to be kind to him and to his Ahl al-Bayt (ع). He became abandoned in his grave, slain among his kinsfolk and Shi'as. In loneliness, being near his grave removes the pain of loneliness and so is his being distant from his grandfather (ع) and from the house which none could enter except those whose conviction of heart Allah tested, and by those who recognize our rights. My father has told me that since he was killed, his place has never been empty of those who bless him from among the angels, the jinns, mankind, and even the wild beasts. Whoever visits it is envied and is rubbed for blessing, and looking at his grave is done in anticipation of earning goodness. Allah boasts to the angels of those who visit it. As far as what such pilgrim receives from us, we invoke Allah's mercy for him every morning and every evening. It has come to my knowledge that some Kufians as well as others in Kufa's outskirts pay it a visit in the eve of the middle of Shaban. They recite the Holy Qur'an; they narrate his story; they mourn him, and women eulogize him while others compose their own eulogies." Hammad said to the Imam (ع), "I have personally witnessed some of what you have described." The Imam, peace be with him, then said, "Praise to Allah Who has made some people come to us, praise us, and mourn us, and praised is He for making our enemy shame them for doing so, threaten them, and describe what they do as ugly."[1]

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1 al-Qummi, *Kamil al-Ziyar al-Ziyarat*, p. 325.al-Tibrisi, *Mazar al-Bihar*, p. 124, citing the previous reference.

AT THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

Having returned from his camp at Nakheela, Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad went straight to his mansion[1]. The sacred head was brought to him, and it was then that the walls started bleeding[2] and a fire broke out from one part of the mansion and made its way to the place where Ibn Ziyad was sitting[3]. He fled away from it and entered one of the mansion's rooms. The head spoke out in a loud voice that was heard by Ibn Ziyad as well as by those who were present there and then. It said, "Where do you flee to? If fire does not catch you in the life of this world, it shall be your abode in the hereafter." The head did not stop speaking till the fire was out. Everyone at the mansion was stunned; nothing like this had ever taken place before[4]. Yet Ibn Ziyad was not admonished by an incident such as that, so he ordered the captives to be brought to him. The ladies of the Messenger of Allah (ع) were brought to him, and they were in the most pathetic condition[5].

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1 According to p. 142, Chapter 9, of al-Thaalibi's book *Lataif al-Maarif*, Abdul-Malik ibn Ameer al-Lakhmi has narrated saying, "I saw the head of al-Husain (ع) ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) at the government mansion of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad placed on a shield, and I saw the head of al-Mukhtar with Mis'ab ibn az-Zubair on another shield. I saw the head of Mis'ab in front of Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan on yet another shield! When I told Abdul-Malik [ibn Marwan ibn al-Hakam] about that, he regarded it as a bad omen and left the place." The same is narrated by al-Sayyati on p. 139 of his book *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, and by Sabt ibn al-Jawzi on p. 148 of his book *Tathkirat al-Khawass* (Iranian edition) by Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson..

2 Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh*, Vol. 4, p. 329. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, p. 116. *Thakha'ir al-Uqba*, p. 145. Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Malahim*, p. 128 (first edition).

3 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 103. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Mujma al-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 196. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 87. Al-Turayhi, *Al-Muntakhab*, p. 339 (Hayderi Press edition). Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 286.

4 *Sharh Qaseedat Abi Firas*, p. 149.

5 Abul-Abbas Ahmed ibn Yusuf al-Qarmani, *Akhbar al-Duwal*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

Al-Husain's head was placed in front of him, so he kept hitting its mouth with a rod which he had in his hand for some time. Zaid ibn Arqam said, "Stop hitting these lips with your rod, for by Allah, the One and Only Allah, I saw the lips of the Messenger of Allah (ع) kissing them," then he broke into tears. Ibn Ziyad said to him, "May Allah cause you never to cease crying! By Allah, had you not been an old man who lost his wits, I would have killed you." Zaid went out of the meeting place saying, "A slave is now a monarch ruling them, treating them as his property. O Arabs! Henceforth, you are the slaves! You have killed Fatima's son and granted authority to the son of Marjana who kills the best among you and permits the evil ones among you to be worshipped. You have accepted humiliation, so away with whoever accepts humiliation."[1]

Zainab daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (ع) kept a distance from the women as she remained disguised, but she could not disguise the prestige of being brought up in the lap of prophethood and in the glory of Imamate, so she attracted Ibn Ziyad's attention. He inquired about her. He was told that she was Zainab, the wise lady, daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (ع). He wanted to tell her how rejoiced he was at what had happened. Said he, "Praise be to Allah Who exposed you to shame, Who killed you and proved you liars." She, peace be with her, responded with: "Praise be to Allah Who honoured us by choosing Muhammed [from among us] as His Prophet and purified us with a perfect purification. Rather, only a debauchee is exposed to shame, and a sinner is proven to be a liar, and we are neither."

Ibn Ziyad asked her, "How have you seen what Allah has done to your Ahl al-Bayt (ع)?" She, peace be with her, said, "I have seen Him treating them most beautifully. These are people to whom Allah

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1 Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, p. 118. At-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 262. Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya wal Nihaya*, Vol. 8, p. 190. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Mujma al-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 195. Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh*, Vol. 4, p. 340. These authors have expressed their disbelief of what he has said. The fact that he was blind does not necessarily render his statement inaccurate, for it is quite possible he had heard the same. Ibn Asakir's statement that Zaid was present then and there supports his.

prescribed martyrdom, so they leaped from their beds welcoming it, and Allah shall gather you and them, and you shall be questioned, and your opponents shall charge you[1]; so, you will then find out whose lot shall be the crack of hell, may your mother, O son of Marjana, lose you."[2]

This statement enraged Ibn Ziyad, and her words incinerated him with ire, especially since she said it before such a huge crowd. He, therefore, was about to kill her when Amr ibn Hareeth said to him, "She is only a woman; can she be held accountable for what she said? She cannot be blamed when she thus prattles."

Ibn Ziyad turned to her one more time and said, "Allah has healed my heart by letting me seek revenge against your tyrant and against the rebels and mutineers from among his Ahl al-Bayt (ع)!" The wise lady calmed herself and said, "By my life! You have killed my middle-aged protector, persecuted my family, cut off my branch and pulled out my roots; so, if all of this heals your heart, then you are indeed healed."[3]

He then turned to Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) whom he asked what his name was. "I am Ali son of al-Husain (ع)," came the answer. Ibn Ziyad asked Ali, "Did not Allah kill Ali (ع)?" Al-Sajjad (ع) answered, "I used to have an older brother[4] also named Ali whom people killed." Ibn Ziyad responded by repeating his statement that it was Allah who had killed

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1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 262.

2 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 90.

3 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 33. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 42. At-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 263. Al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*. Al-Tibrisi, *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda*, p. 141. According to p. 145, Vol. 3, of *Kamil al-Mibrad* (1347 A.H./1735 A.D. edition), Zainab daughter of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), the eldest of those taken captive to Ibn Ziyad, was quite eloquent, driving her argument against the latter home. Ibn Ziyad, therefore, said to her, "If you achieved your objective behind your oratory, your father was an orator and a poet." She said to him, "What would women do with poetry?" Ibn Ziyad, in fact, used to stutter, and he had a lisp; his speech had a heavy Persian accent.

him. Al-Sajjad, therefore, said, "Allah takes the souls away at the time of their death; none dies except with Allah's permission." Ibn Ziyad did not appreciate him thus responding to his statement rather than remaining silent, so he ordered him to be killed, but his aunt, the wise lady Zainab, put her arms around him and said, "O Ibn Ziyad! Suffices you what you have shed of our blood..., have you really spared anyone other than this?[1] If you want to kill him, kill me with him as well." Al-Sajjad (ع) said [to Ibn Ziyad], "Do you not know that we are used to being killed, and that martyrdom is one of Allah's blessings upon us?"[2] Ibn Ziyad looked at both of them then said, "Leave him for her. Amazing is their tie of kinship; she wishes to be killed with him."[3]

Al-Rubab, wife of Imam al-Husain (ع), took the head and put it in her lap. She kissed it and composed poetry lines mourning

When it became clear to Ibn Ziyad that there were many people present who were voicing their resentment of what he had committed and how everyone was repeating what Zainab had said, he feared an uprising, so he ordered the police to jail the captives inside a house adjacent to the grand mosque[4]. Ibn Ziyad's doorman has said, "I was with them when he issued his order to jail them. I saw how the men and women

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4 Such is the statement of Muhammed ibn Jarir at-Tabari in his book *Al-Muntakhab* in a footnote on p. 89, Vol. 12, of his *Tarikh*. So does Abul Faraj al-Isfahani on p. 49 of the Iranian edition of his book *Maqatil al-Talibiyeen*, and al-Dimyari in his book *Hayat al-Hayawan*, as well as al-Turayhi's book *Al-Muntakhab*, p. 238 (Hayderi Press edition). It is also indicated on p. 58 of Misab al-Zubayhi's book *Nasab Quraish*.

1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 263.

2 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 91. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 13.

3 Ibn al-Atheer, Vol. 4, p. 34.

4 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 91. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 43.

assembled there weeping and beating their faces."[1] Zainab shouted at people saying, "Nobody should tend to us except either a bondmaid, a freed bondmaid, or *umm wuld*[2], for they were taken captive just as we have been."[3] Only a female captive is familiar with the pain and humiliation of captivity; therefore, she would be sympathetic and would not rejoice nor enjoy seeing them in captivity. This is undeniable.

Ibn Ziyad again called them to his presence. When they were brought to him, their women saw al-Husain's head in front of him with its divine rays ascending from its curves to the depth of the heavens. Al-Rubab, al-Husain's wife, could not check herself from falling upon it and composed more poetry eulogizing him.
Hameed ibn Muslim has said, "Ibn Ziyad ordered to hold a congregarional prayer service. They assembled at the grand mosque. Ibn Ziyad ascended the pulpit and said, All Praise is due to Allah Who manifested the truth and elevated those who act according to it and Who granted victory to the commander of the faithful Yazid and to his party, and Who killed the liar and the son of the liar Husain son of Ali and his Shi'as.'[4] Nobody among that crowd that had sunk in misguidance objected to such a preposterous statement except Abdullah ibn Afeef al-Azdi and also one of the sons of Walibah al-Ghamidi who both stood up and said to him, O son of Marjana! The liar and the son of the liar is you and your father, and so is everyone who accepts your authority and his son! O son of Marjana! Do you really kill the offspring of the prophets and still talk about who is truthful and who is a liar?!'[5] Ibn Ziyad asked who the speaker was. Ibn Afeef answered by saying, I am the speaker, O enemy of Allah! Do you really kill the

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1 Muhammed al-Nishapuri, *Rawdat al-Waizeen*, p. 163.

2 "Freed mother of son" means a bondmaid who bears sons by her master and who is set free on that account but remains in his custody as his wife.

3 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 92. al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 130.

4 Ibn al-Atheer, Vol. 1, p. 34.

5 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 263.

righteous offspring from whom Allah removed all abomination then claim that you are a follower of the Islamic creed?! Oh! Is there anyone to help?! Where are the sons of the Muhajiran and the Ansar to seek revenge against your tyrant, the one who and whose father were both cursed by Muhammed (ص), the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds.' Ibn Ziyad's anger now intensified. He ordered him to be brought to him. The police grabbed him.[1] It was then that Ibn Afeef shouted the slogan used by the Azdis which was: **!يا مبرور** Ya Mabroor!' This caused a large number of the Azdis present there to leap to his rescue and to forcibly free him from the police and take him safely home."

Abdul-Rahman ibn Makhnaf al-Azdi said to him, "Woe unto someone else other than you! You have surely condemned yourself and your tribe to destruction!"[2]
Ibn Ziyad ordered Jandab ibn Abdullah al-Azdi, who was an old man, to be brought to him. He said to him, "O enemy of Allah! Did you not fight on Abu Turab's side during the Battle of Siffeen?" The old man answered, "Yes, and I love him and am proud of him, while I despise you and your father especially after you have killed the grandson of the Prophet (ص) and his companions and the members of his family without fearing the One and Only Allah, the Great Avenger." Ibn Ziyad said, "You have less feeling of shame than that blind man, and I seek nearness to Allah through shedding your blood." Jandab said, "In that case, Allah shall never bring you closer to Him." Ibn Ziyad, on a second thought, feared the might of the man's Azd tribe, so he left him alone saying, "He is only an old man who has lost his mind and his wits." He released him.[3]

AL-MUKHTAR AL-THAQAFI
At the same time when Ibn Ziyad ordered the captives to be brought to his meeting place, he also ordered al-Mukhtar son of Abu Ubayd al-

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1 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*.

2 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 263.

3 Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 51. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 55.Muhammed Hasan al-Shaban Kurdi al-Qazwini, *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 52.

Thaqafi to be brought to him, too. Al-Mukhtar had been in prison since the assassination of Muslim ibn Aqeel. When al-Mukhtar saw that horrific and most deplorable scene, he sighed loudly and an exchange of harsh words took place between him and Ibn Ziyad wherein the harshest words were al-Mukhtar's. Ibn Ziyad became burning with outrage and ordered him to be sent back to jail[1]. Some say that he whipped him, blinding one of his eyes.[2]

After the execution of Ibn Afeef, al-Mukhtar was released due to the interference of Abdullah son of Omer ibn al-Khattab who asked Yazid to have him released. Yazid was the husband of al-Mukhtar's sister Safiyya daughter of Abu Ubayd al-Thaqafi. But Ibn Ziyad postponed carrying out Yazid's order for three days. Having ordered the execution of Ibn Afeef, Ibn Ziyad delivered a speech wherein he abused the Commander of the Faithful (ع), causing al-Mukhtar to denounce and to taunt him to his face saying, "You are the liar, O enemy of Allah and enemy of His Messenger! Rather, Praise to Allah Who dignified al-Husain (ع) and his army with Paradise and with forgiveness just as He humiliated Yazid and his army with the fire and with shame." Ibn Ziyad hurled an iron bar at him that fractured his forehead, then he ordered him to be sent back to jail, but people reminded him that Omer ibn Sa'd was the husband of his sister while another brother-in-law was none other than Abdullah ibn Omer [ibn al-Khattab]. They reminded him of his lofty lineage, so he changed his mind of having him killed, yet he insisted on sending him back to prison. For the second time did Abdullah ibn Omer write Yazid who in turn wrote Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad ordering him to release the man[3].
Al-Mukhtar incessantly kept after that informing the Shi'as of the merits which he knew of the companions of the Commander of the Faithful (ع), of how he rose seeking revenge for al-Husain (ع), and how

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1 *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 52.

2 Ibn Rustah, *Al-Alaq al-Nafisa*, p. 224.

3 al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, pp. 178-179. The author of *Riyad al-Ahzan,* namely Muhammed Hasan al-Shaban Kurdi al-Qazwini, briefly narrates it on p. 58.

he killed Ibn Ziyad and those who fought al-Husain (ع).[1]

One incident he narrated was the following which he recollected about the time when he was in Ibn Ziyad's jail:

Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Nawfal ibn Abdul-Muttalib and Maytham al-Tammar were two of his cell mates. Abdullah ibn al-Harith asked for a piece of iron to remove the hair in certain parts of his body saying, "I do not feel secure against Ibn Ziyad killing me, and I do not want him to do so while there is unwanted hair on my body." Al-Mukhtar said to him, "By Allah he shall not kill you, nor shall he kill me, nor shall you face except very little hardship before you become the governor of Basra!" Maytham heard their dialogue, so he said to al-Mukhtar, "You yourself will rise seeking revenge for al-Husain's blood, and you shall kill the same man who wants us to be killed, and you shall trample on his cheeks with your very foot."[2] This came to be exactly as these men had said. Abdullah ibn al-Harith was released from jail after Yazid's death and became the governor of Basra. After only one year, al-Mukhtar rose seeking revenge against the killers of al-Husain (ع), killing Ibn Ziyad, Harmalah ibn Kahil, Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan and a large number of the Kufians who had betrayed al-Husain (ع). As Ibn Nama al-Hilli tells us, he [and his army] killed eighteen thousand Kufians, then almost ten thousand[3] of them fled away from him and sought refuge with Mus'ab ibn az-Zubair. Among them was Shabth ibn Rab'i who reached him riding a mule whose ears and tail he had cut off and who was wearing a torn outer garment and shouting, "Help! Lead us to fight this debauchee who demolished our homes and killed our honourable men!"[4]

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1 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, p. 284, citing Ibn Nama's book *Akhth al-Thar*.

2 Ibn Abul-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, Vol. 1, p. 210 (Egyptian edition). Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, p. 284. Al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*.

3 Abu Hanifah al-Dainuri, namely Ahmed ibn Dawud (died in 281 A.H./894 A.D.), *Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, p. 295.

4 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 7, p. 146.

THE SACRED HEAD SPEAKS

Since his early childhood, the martyred grandson of the Prophet (ص) remained an ally of the Qur'an. Thus were both he and his brother (ع), for they were the legacy of the Messenger of Allah and his vicegerents. The greatest Prophet (ص) had stated that they and the Holy Qur'an would never part from one another till they would meet him at the Pool of Kawthar. Al-Husain (ع), therefore, never ceased reciting the Qur'an all his life as he taught and cultivated others, when he was at home or when travelling. Even during his stand in the Battle of Taff, although surrounded by his foes, he used the Qur'an to argue with them and to explain his point of view to them. Thus was the son of the Messenger of Allah (ع) marching towards his sacred objective energetically, so much so that now his sacred head kept reciting the Qur'an even as it stood atop a spear, perhaps someone among the people would be illuminated with the light of the truth. But this lamp-post of guidance did not see except people whose comprehension was limited, whose hearts were sealed, and whose ears were deafened: "Allah sealed their hearts and hearing, and over their vision there is a veil" (Qur'an, 2:7).

Zaid ibn Arqam has said, "I was sitting in my room when they passed by, and I heard the head reciting this verse: Or do you think that the fellows of the cave and the inscription were of Our wonderful signs?' (Qur'an, 18:9). My hair stood up, and I said, By Allah, O son of the Messenger of Allah! Your head is much more wonderous!"[1]

When the severed head was placed at the money changers' section of

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1 al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*. *Al-Khasa'is al-Kubra*, Vol. 2, p. 125. On p. 362, Vol. 1, of *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, Ibn Abul-Hadid says, "Zaid ibn Arqam was one of those who deviated from the line of the Commander of the Faithful Ali, peace be with him. He was reluctant to testify that the Commander of the Faithful (ع) was appointed [by the Prophet] to take charge of the nation after him, so he (ع) condemned him with blindness. He, indeed, became blind till his death. According to Ibn al-Atheer, who indicates so on p. 24, Vol. 4, of his book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Ibn Ziyad ordered the head of al-Husain (ع) to be paraded throughout Kufa. The same is stated by Ibn Katheer on p. 191, Vol. 8, of his book *Al-Bidaya*, and also by al-Maqrazi on p. 288, Vol. 2, of his *Khutat*.

the bazaar, there was a great deal of commotion and noise of the dealers and customers. The Master of Martyrs (ع) wanted to attract the attention to him so that people would listen to his terse admonishment, so his severed head hawked quite loudly, thus turning all faces to it. Never did people hear a severed head hawking before the martyrdom of al-Husain (ع). It then recited Surat al-Kahf from its beginning till it reached the verse saying, "They were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased their guidance" (Qur'an, 18:13), "... and do not (O Lord!) increase the unjust aught but error." (Qur'an, 71:24)

The head was hung on a tree. People assembled around it looking at the dazzling light that emanated from it as it recited the verse saying, "And those who oppressed shall come to know what an end they shall meet" (Qur'an, 26:227)[1].

Hilal ibn Mu'awiyah has said, "I saw a man carrying the head of al-Husain (ع) as it [the head] was saying, You separated between my head and my body, so may Allah separate between your flesh and bones, and may He make you a Sign for those who stray from the Straight Path.' He, therefore, raised his whip and kept whipping the head till it ceased."[2]

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1 Ibn Shahr Ashub, Vol. 2, p. 188.

2 *Sharh Qasidat Abi Firas*, p. 148.

Salamah ibn Kaheel heard the head reciting the following verse from the top of the spear where it had been placed: "Allah shall suffice you for them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing" (Qur'an, 2:137)[1].

Ibn Wakeedah says that he heard the head reciting Surat al-Kahf, so he was doubtful whether it was, indeed, the voice of the Imam (ع), whereupon he, peace be with him, stopped his recitation and turned to the man to say, "O son of Wakeedah! Do you not know that we, the Imams, are living with our Lord receiving our sustenance?" He, therefore, decided to steal and bury the head. It was then that the glorious head spoke again to him saying, "O son of Wakeedah! There is no way to do that. Their shedding my blood is greater with Allah than placing me on a spear; so, leave them alone, for they shall come to know when the collars are placed around their necks and when they are dragged with chains."[2] Al-Minhal ibn Amr has said, "I saw al-Husain's head in Damascus atop a spear and in front of it stood a man; the head was reciting Surat al-Kahf. When the recitation came to the verse saying, Or do you think that the fellows of the cave and the inscription were of Our wonderful signs?' (Qur'an, 18:9) , the head spoke in an articulate tongue saying, More wonderous than the fellows of the cave is killing me and thus transporting me.'"[3]

When Yazid ordered the killing of a messenger sent by the then Roman [Byzantian] emperor who resented what Yazid had committed, the head loudly articulated these words: La hawla wala quwwata illa billah! (There is no power nor might except in Allah)."[4]

AL-ASHDAQ

Ibn Jarar at-Tabari, the renown historian, narrates the following:

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1 *Asrar al-Shahada*, p. 488.

2 *Sharh Qasidat Abi Firas*, p. 148.

3 al-Sayyati, *Al-Khasa'is*, Vol. 2, p. 127.

4 al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 151.

"Ibn Ziyad wanted to send Abdul-Malik ibn al-Harith al-Salami to Medina in order to inform Amr ibn Sa'd al-Ashdaq[1] of the killing of al-Husain (ع), but he sought to be excused of such an undertaking, claiming to be sick. Al-Ashdaq refused to accept his excuse. Ibn Ziyad is described as very heavy-handed, nobody can tolerate his ire. He ordered the man to rush and to buy another she-camel if the one he was riding was not fast enough, and not to let anyone reach the destination before him. He, therefore, rushed to Medina. A man from Quraish met him and asked him why he seemed to be in such a hurry. The answer rests with the governor,' was his answer. When Ibn Sa'd was informed of al-Husain (ع) having been killed, he was very happily excited and was subdued with elation. He ordered a caller to announce it in the city's alleys, and before long, the cries and the wailings coming from the Hashemite ladies mourning the Master of the Youths of Paradise (ع) were heard like never before. These cries reached all the way to the house of al-Ashdaq who laughed and quoted a verse of poetry composed by Amr ibn Madi-Karb. He maliciously added saying, "A wailing noise like the one we raised when Uthman was killed."[2] Then he turned to the grave of the Messenger of Allah (ع) and again maliciously said, "Now we have gotten even with you, Messenger of Allah, for what you did to us during the Battle of Badr." A number of men from the Ansar rebuked him with shame for having made such a statement.[3]

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1 According to p. 240, Vol. 5, of Nar ad-Din Abul-Hasan, namely Ibn Hajar al-Haythami's book *Mujma al-Zawa'id wa Manba al-Fawa'id*, and also according to p. 141 of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, Abu Hurayra is quoted as saying, "I have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny, saying, One of the tyrants of Banu Umayyah shall have a nosebleed on my pulpit, and his blood will flow thereupon.'" Amr ibn Sa'd did, indeed, have a nosebleed as he was on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah (ع), staining it with his blood.

2 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 368.

3 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*, p. 222. Ibn Abul-Hadid, *Sharh Nahjul Balagha*, Vol. 1, p. 361.

He ascended the pulpit and said, "O people! It is a blow for a blow, and a crushing for a crushing! A sermon followed another! This is sound wisdom, so no nathr can do any good. He condemned us as we praised him, cut off his ties with us though we did not, just as it was his habit, and just as it was ours, but what else can we do to a man who drew his sword with the intention to kill us other than to put an end to the danger to which he exposed us?"

Abdullah ibn al-Sa'ib stood up and said to him, "Had Fatima (ع) been alive, and had she seen al-Husain's [severed] head, she would have wept for him." Amr ibn Sa'd rebuked him and said, "We are more worthy of Fatima than you: Her father was our uncle, her husband was our brother, his mother was our daughter. And had Fatima been alive, she would have cried but would not have blamed those who killed him in self-defense."[1]

Amr was very crude and uncouth, a man of legendary cruelty. He ordered Amr ibn az-Zubair ibn al-Awwam[2], head of the police force, after al-Husain (ع) had been killed, to demolish all the houses of Banu Hashim [the Prophet's clansmen]. He did, oppressing them beyond limits... He also demolished the home of Ibn Mutee and beat people with cruelty. They fled from him and went to join Abdullah ibn az-Zubair[3]. The reason why he was called "al-Ashdaq" [one whose jaws are twisted to the right or to the left] is due to the fact that his jaws were twisted after having gone to extremes in taunting Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)[4]. Allah, therefore, punished him [in this life before the

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1 al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 131.

2 According to p. 23, Vol. 4, of al-Balathiri's book *Ansab al-Ashraf*, the mother of Amr ibn az-Zubair was Ama daughter of Khalid ibn Sa'd ibn al-as. Her father was in command of an army which Amr ibn Sa'd al-Ashdaq dispatched to Mecca to fight Abdullah ibn az-Zubair. Abdullah's army captured Amr ibn az-Zubair, so Abdullah ordered everyone who had suffered an injustice at his hand to whip him. The whipping led to his death.

3 Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Al-Aghani*, Vol. 4, p. 155.

4 al-Mirzabani, *Mu'jam al-Shuara'*, p. 231.

hereafter] in the worst manner. He was carried to Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan chained; after he profusely remonstrated with the latter, he was ordered to be killed[1].

Escorted by a number of women from her kinsfolk, the daughter of Aqeel ibn Abu Talib went out to visit the grave of the Prophet (ص) where she threw herself on it, burst in teras then turned to the Muhajiran and the Ansar and came forth instantaneously with these verses:

What will you on the Judgment Day
To the Prophet stand and say?
Surely what you will hear will be true:
Those who betrayed his Progeny were you.
Were you present, or were you not there at all
And justice is combined in the Lord of all...?
You handed it over to those who are never fair
So your intercession with Allah will go nowhere.
Though on the Taff Day absent was he,
Yet all the dead did your very eyes see.
You saw all those who did die,
So to Allah you shall never come nigh.

All those present wept. There was no such weeping ever before[2]. Her sister Zainab kept mourning al-Husain (ع) in the most somber manner.

ABDULLAH IBN JAFER

Ibn Jarar at-Tabari has said that when the news of al-Husain's martyrdom was announced, Abdullah ibn Ja'far held a mourning majlis, so people came to him to offer their condolences. His slave Abul-Lislas[3] said to him, "This is what we got from al-Husain (ع)!" He hurled his sandal at him as he said, "O son of the stinking woman! How

1 Abu Hilal al-'Askari, *Jamharat al-Amthal*, p. 9 (Indian edition).

2 Shaikh at-Tusi, *Al-Amali*, p. 55. On p. 227, Vol. 2, of his book *Al-Manaqib*,Ibn Shahr Ashub says it was Asma' who had composed those verses.

dare you say something like that about al-Husain (ع)?! By Allah! Had I been with him, I would not have liked to part with him before being killed defending him. By Allah! What consoles me is that both my sons were martyred in his defense together with my brother as well as my cousin who all stood firmly on his side." Then he turned to those in his presence and said, "Praise to Allah! It surely is very heavy on my heart to see al-Husain (ع) get killed, and that I could not defend him with my life, but both my sons have."[1]

THE CAPTIVES TAKEN TO SYRIA

Ibn Ziyad sent a messenger to Yazid to inform him that al-Husain (ع) and those in his company were killed, that his children were in Kufa, and that he was waiting for his orders as to what to do with them. In his answer, Yazid ordered him to send them together with the severed heads to him[2].

Ubaydullah wrote something, tied it to a rock then hurled it inside the prison where the family of Muhammed (ص) was kept. In it he said, "Orders have been received from Yazid to take you to him on such-and-such a day. If you hear the takbeer, you should write your wills; otherwise, there is security." The post returned from Syria with the news that al-Husain's family is being sent to Syria[3].

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3 His name as stated on p. 194 of al-Irbili's book *Kashf al-Ghummah* was "Abul-Salasil," the man of the chains.

1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 218.

2 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, pp. 95-97.

3 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 266. On p. 96, at-Tabari states that Abu Bukrah was given one week by Bishr ibn Arta'ah to go to Mu'awiyah. He went back from Syria on the seventh day. On p. 74 of his book *Muthir al-Ahzan*, Ibn Nama says that Ameerah was dispatched by Abdullah ibn Omer to Yazid in order to get him to release al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi. Yazid wrote a letter in this regard to Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad. Ameerah brought him the letter to Kufa, crossing the distance from Syria to Kufa in eleven days.

Ibn Ziyad ordered Zajr ibn Qays and Abu Burda ibn 'Awf al-Azdi as well as Tariq ibn Zabyan to head a band of Kufians charged with carrying al-Husain's severed head and of those killed with him to Yazid[1]. Another account says that Mujbir ibn Murrah ibn Khalid ibn Qanab ibn Omer ibn Qays ibn al-Harth ibn Malik ibn Ubaydullah ibn Khuzaymah ibn Lu'ayy did so[2].

They were trailed by Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) with his hands tied to his neck in the company of his family[3] in a condition the sight of which would cause anyone's skin to shiver[4].

With them was Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan, Mujfir ibn Thulabah al-a'idi[5], Shabth ibn Rab'i, Amr ibn al-Hajjas, in addition to other men. They were ordered to mount the heads on spears and to display them wherever they went[6]. They hurried till they caught up with them[7].

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1 *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 264. Ibn al-Atheer, Vol. 4, p. 34. *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 191. Al-Khawarizmi. Al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*. Al-Tibrisi, *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda*, p. 149. Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 97.

2 Ibn al-Atheer (died in 630 A.H./1232 A.D.), *Al-Isaba fi Tamyeez al-Sahaba*, Vol. 3, p. 489, where Murrah's biography is discussed.

3 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 254. al-Maqrazi, *Khutat*, Vol. 2, p. 288.

4 al-Qarmani, *Tarikh*, p. 108. Al-Yafii, *Mir'at al-Jinan*, Vol. 1, p. 134. In both references, it is stated that the daughters of Imam al-Husain (ع) son of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) were taken into captivity, and Zain al-Abidin (ع) was with them, and that he was sick. They were driven as captives; may Allah be the Killer of those who did it. Only Ibn Taymiyyah differed from all other historians when he stated on p. 288 of his book *Minhaj al-Itidal* saying that al-Husain's women were taken to Medina after he had been killed.

5 On p. 165 of Ibn Hazm's book *Jamharat Ansab al-Arab*, it is stated that, "Among Banu aidah are: Mujfir ibn Murrah ibn Khalid ibn amir ibn Qaban ibn Amr ibn Qays ibn al-Harith ibn Malik ibn Ubayd ibn Khuzaymah ibn Lu'ayy, and he is the one who carried the head of al-Husain (ع) son of Ali, peace be with both of them, to Syria."

Ibn Laheeah is quoted as saying that he saw a man clinging to Ka'ba's curtains seeking refuge with his Lord and saying, "And I cannot see You doing that!" Ibn Laheeah took him aside and said to him, "You must be insane! Allah is most Forgiving, most Merciful. Had your sins been as many as rain drops, He would still forgive you." He said to Ibn Laheeah, "Be informed that I was among those who carried al-Husain's head to Syria. Whenever it was dark, we would put the head down, sit around it and drink wine. During one night, I and my fellows were guarding it when I saw lightning and creatures that surrounded the head. I was terrified and stunned and remained silent. I heard crying and wailing and someone saying, O Muhammed! Allah ordered me to obey you; so, if you order me, I can cause an earthquake that will swallow these people just as it swallowed the people of Lot.' He said to him, O Gabriel! I shall call them to account on the Day of Judgment before my Lord, Glory to Him.' It was then that I screamed, O Messenger of Allah! I plead to you for security!' He said to me, Be gone, for Allah shall never forgive you.' So, do you still think that Allah will forgive me?"[1]

At one stop on their journey, they put the purified head down; soon they saw an iron pen that came out of the wall and wrote the following in blood[2]:

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6 al-Turayhi, *Al-Muntakhab*, p. 339 (second edition).

7 al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*.

1 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 98.

2 Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Mujma al-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 199. Al-Sayyati, *Al-Khasa'is*, Vol. 2, p. 127. Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh*, Vol. 4, p. 342. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, p. 116. *Al-Kawakib al-Durriyya* by al-Qatari al-Biladi al-Bahrani, Vol. 1, p. 57. Al-Shabrawi, *Al-Ithaf bi Hubbil-Ashraf*, p. 23. On p. 98 of his book *Al-Luhuf*, Ibn Tawoos attributes this statement to *Tarikh Baghdad* by Ibn al-Najjar. On p. 108 of his *Tarikh*, al-Qarmani says, "They reached a monastery on the highway where they stayed for the afternoon. They found the said line written on one of its walls." On p. 285, Vol. 2, of his *Khutat*, al-Maqrazi says, "This was written in the past, and nobody knows who said it." On p. 53 of his book *Muthir al-Ahzan*, Ibn Nama says, "Three hundred years before the Prophetic mission, there was some

Does a nation that killed al-Husain really hope for a way
His grandfather will intercede for them on the Judgment Day?

But they were not admonished by such a miracle, and blindness hurled them into the very deepest of all pits; surely Allah, the most Exalted One, is the best of judges.

One farasang before reaching their destination, they placed the head on a rock; a drop of blood fell from it on the rock. Every year, that drop would boil on Ashura, and people would assemble there around it and hold mourning commemmorations in honour of al-Husain (ع). A great deal of wailing would be around it. This continued to take place till Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan ascended the throne in 65 A.H./684 A.D.. He ordered that rock to be removed. It was never seen after that, but the spot where that rock stood became the site of a dome built in its honour which they called "al-Nuqta" (the drop)[1].
Near the town of Hamat and among its orchards stood a mosque called "Masjid al-Husain (ع)." People there say that they escorted the rock and the head of al-Husain (ع) that bled all the way to Damascus[2].

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digging in the land of the [Byzantine] Romans, and this line was found inscribed in the Musnad on a rock, and the Musnad is the language of the offspring of Seth."

1 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*, p. 228. It is stated on p. 23, Vol. 3, of *Nahr al-Thahab fi Tarikh Halab* that, "When al-Husain's head was brought with the captives, they reached a mountain to the west of Aleppo. One drop of blood fell from the sacred head above which a mausoleum called Mashhad al-Nuqta [mausoleum of the drop] was erected." On p. 280, Vol. 3, it cites Yahya ibn Abu Tay's *Tarikh* recounting the names of those who constructed and renovated it. On p. 66 of the book titled *Al-Isharat ila Marifat al-Ziyarat* by Abul- al-Hasan Ali ibn Abu Bakr al-Harawi (who died in 611 A.H./1215 A.D.), it states that, "In the town of Nasibin, there is a mausoleum called Mashhad al-Nuqta, a reference to a drop from al-Husain's head. Also, there is at Suq al-Nashshabin a place called Mashhad al-Ras where the head was hung when the captives were brought to Syria."

2 The mentor and revered *muhaddith* Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi says the following in his book *Nafas al-Mahmum*, "I saw that stone on my way to the

Near Aleppo there is a shrine known as "Masqat al-Saqt."[1] The reason why it was called so is that when the ladies of the Messenger of Allah (ع) were taken to that place, al-Husain's wife had miscarried a son named Muhsin[2].

At some stops, the head was placed atop a spear next to a monk's monastery. During the night, the monk heard a great deal of tasbeeh and tahleel, and he saw a dazzling light emanating from it. He also heard a voice saying, "Peace be upon you, O father of Abdulah!" He was amazed and did not know what to make of it. In the morning, he asked people about that head and was told that it was the head of al-Husain (ع) ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), son of Fatima (ع) daughter of Prophet Muhammed (ص). He said to them, "Woe unto you, people! True are the accounts that said that the heavens would rain blood." He asked their permission to kiss the head, but they refused till he paid them some money. He declared his shahada and embraced Islam through the blessing of the one who was beheaded just for supporting

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pilgrimage, and I heard the servants talking about it."

1 On p. 173, Vol. 3, of *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, and on p. 128 of *Khareedat al-Ajaib*, it is referred to as "Mashhad al-Tarh." On p. 278, Vol. 2, of *Nahr al-Thahab*, it is calle "Mashhad al-Dakka." Mashhad al-Tarh is located to the west of Aleppo. In the *Tarikh* of Ibn Abu Tay is cited saying that Mashhad al-Tarh was built in the year 351 A.H./962 A.D. according to the order of Sayf al-Dawlah. Other historians have said that one of al-Husain's wives had miscarried in that place when al-Husain's children and the severed heads were brought with them. There used to be a useful mineral in that area, but when its residents felt elated upon seeing the captives, Zainab invoked Allah's curse against them; therefore, that mineral lost its useful qualities. Then the author goes on to document the history of its renovations.

2 In the discussion of the subject of "Jawshan," on p. 173, Vol. 3, of his work *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, and also on p. 128 of *Khareedat al-Ajaib*, where reference to the Jawshan Mountain is made, it is stated that one of al-Husain's family members taken captive asked some of those who worked there to give him bread and water. When they refused, he invoked Allah to curse them, thus condemning the labour of all labourers at that place to always be unprofitable.

the divine call. When they left that place, they looked at the money the monk had given them and saw this verse inscribed on it: "And those who oppressed shall come to find how evil their end shall be" (Qur'an, 26:227)[1].

IN SYRIA

When they were near Damascus, Umm Kulthum sent a message to al-Shimr asking him to let them enter the city from the least crowded highway, and to take the heads out so that people might be diverted by looking at them rather than looking at the women. He escorted them as they were in a condition from which skins shiver and senses quiver. Al-Shimr instead ordered his men to take the captives for display before onlookers and to place the severed heads in their midst[2].

On the first day of Safar, they entered Damascus[3] and were stopped at the Clocks Gate[4]. People came out carrying drums and trumpets in excitement and jubilation. A man came close to Sukayna and asked her, "What captives are you all from?" She said, "We are captives belonging to the family of Muhammed (ص)."[5]

Yazid was sitting at a surveilance outpost overlooking the mountain of

1 Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson, *Tathkirat al-Khawass*, p. 150.

2 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 99. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 53. *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 145.

3 Such is recorded on p. 331 of the offset edition of al-Bayrani's book *Al-athar al-Baqiya*, al-Bahai's book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, p. 269 of *Musbah al-Kaf'ami*, and p. 15 of al-Fayd's book *Taqwim al-Muhsinin*. According to p. 266, Vol. 6, of at-Tabari's *Tarikh*, the time from their imprisonment till the post coming from Syria informing them of their arrival at Syria in the beginning of the month of Safar must have been a lengthy one except if birds had been used to carry such mail.

4 According to p. 61, Vol. 2, of al-Khawarizmi's book *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, they were brought to Damascus through Toma's Gate. This Gate, according to p. 109 of *Al-Maqasid*, was one of the ancient gates of Damascus. Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Ali ibn Ibrahim, who is known as Ibn Shaddad and who died in 684 A.H./1286 A.D., says on p. 72, Vol. 3, of *Alaq al-Khateera*, "It was called the Clocks Gate because atop that gate there were clocks marking each hour of the day: small copper sparrows, a copper raven and a copper snake marked the timing: at the end of each hour, sparrows would come out, the raven would let a shriek out, and one (or more) stone would be dropped in the copper washbowl [making it sound]."

Jerun. When he saw the captives with the heads planted atop the spears as their throng came close, a crow croaked; so he composed these lines:

لما بدت تلك الحمول و أشرقت
تلك الرؤوس على شفا جيرون
نعب الغراب فقلت: قل أو لا تقل
فقد اقتضيت من الرسول ديوني

When those conveyances drew nigh
And the heads on the edge of Jerun,
The crow croaked so said I:
Say whatever you wish to say
Or say nothing at all,
From the Messenger have I today
What he owed me he did repay.[1]

It is due to these verses that Ibn al-Jawzi and Abu Ya'li, the judge, as well as al-Taftazani and Jalal al-Sayyuti permitted cursing Yazid and labelling him as *kafir*, apostage, unbeliever.[2]

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5 al-Saduq, *Al-Aamali*, p. 100, *majlis* No. 31. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p.60.

1 According to p. 161 of the offset Damascus edition of Ibn Hawqal's book *Sourat al-Ard*, there is none in the Islamic world better than it. It used to be a temple for the Sabeans, then the Greeks used to worship in it, then the Jews as well as Pagan kings. The gate of this mosque is called Jayrun's Gate. It is over this gate that the head of John the Baptist (Yahya son of Zakariyya) was crucified. It was on this same Jayrun's Gate that the head of al-Husain (ع) ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was crucified in the same place where the head of John the Baptist was crucified. During the reign of al-Walid ibn Abdul-Malik, its walls were covered with marble. It seems that this is the same as the Umayyad Mosque.

2 al-alasi, *Rah al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 26, p. 73, where the verse "So do you wish, if you take charge... etc." is explained. The author says, "He meant, when he said, I have taken back from the Messenger (ع) what he owed me,' that he avenged the loss which he had suffered during the Battle of Badr at the hands of the Messenger of Allah when his grandfather Utbah, his uncle, and others were killed. This is nothing but obvious apostacy. Such was the similitude struck by Ibn al-Zubari before accepting Islam.

Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Saidi came close to Sukayna daughter of al-Husain (ع) and asked her, "Is there anything I can do for you?" She asked him to pay the man who was carrying the head some money and to ask him in return to stay away from the women so that people would be distracted by looking at the head instead of looking at the women. Sahl did so[1].

An elderly man came near as-Sajjad and said, "Praise be to Allah Who annihilated you and Who granted the governor the upper hand over you!" At such a juncture, the Imam poured of his own kindness over that poor [ignorant] man who was barainwashed by falsehood in order to bring him closer to the truth and to show him the path of guidance. Such are the Ahl al-Bayt (ع): their light shines over those whom they know to be pure of heart and pure of essence and, as such, who are ready to receive guidance. He, peace be with him, asked the man, "Have you read the Qur'an, O shaikh?" The man answered as-Sajjad in the affirmative. "Have you read," continued as-Sajjad, "the verse saying, Say: I do not ask you for a reward for it [for conveying the Islamic Message to you] except that you treat my kinsfolk with kindness,' the verse saying, And give the [Prophet's] kinsfolk their due rights,' and the verse saying, And be informed that whatever you earn by way of booty, for Allah belongs the fifth thereof and for the Messenger [of Allah] and for the [Prophet's] kinsfolk'?" The man answered by saying, "Yes, I have read all of them." He (ع) then said, "We, by Allah, are the kinsfolk referred to in all these verses." Then the Imam (ع) asked him whether he had read the verse saying, "Allah only desires to remove all abomination from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and purifies you with a perfect purification" (Qur'an, 33:33). "Yes" was the answer. Al-Sajjad, peace be with him, said to him, "We are Ahl al-Bayt whom Allah purified." "I ask you in the Name of Allah," asked the man, "are you really them?" Al-Sajjad, peace be with him, said, "By our grandfather the Messenger of Allah, we are, without any doubt."
It was then that the elderly man fell on as-Sajjad's feet kissing them as he said, "I dissociate myself before Allah from whoever killed you." He sought repentance of the Imam (ع) from whatever rude remarks he had earlier made. The encounter involving this elderly man reached Yazid

1 al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 145.

who ordered him to be killed[1]...

Before being brought to Yazid's court, they were tied with ropes. The beginning of the rope was around the neck of Zain al-Abidin [Ali son of Imam al-Husain (ع), also called as-Sajjad, the one who prostrates to Allah quite often], then around the necks of Zainab, Umm Kulthum, up to all the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (ع)... Whenever they laxed in their walking, they were whipped till they were brought face to face with Yazid who was then sitting on his throne. Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) asked him, "What do you think the reaction of the Messenger of Allah (ع) might have been had he seen us looking like this?" Everyone wept. Yazid ordered the ropes to be cut off.[2]

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1 Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 100. According to p. 112, Vol. 4, of Ibn Katheer's *Tafsir*, p. 31, Vol. 25, of al-alasi's *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, and p. 61, Vol. 2, of al-Khawarizmi's book *Maqtal al-Husain (ع)*, as-Sajjad (ع) had recited the verse invoking compassion (for the Prophet's family) to that old man who accepted it as a valid argument.

2 al-Yafi'i, *Mir'at al-Jinan*, p. 341. On p. 35, Vol. 4, of his book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Ibn al-Atheer, as well as the author of *Muraj al-Thahab*, both indicate that when the head was brought to Yazid, the latter kept hitting it with a rod in his hand as he cited these verses by the poet al-Haseen ibn Haman:

> Our people refused to be fair to us, so
> Swords in our hands bleeding did so,
> Splitting the heads of men who are to us dear
> Though they were to injustice and oppression more near.

On p. 313, Vol. 2, of *Al-Iqd al-Farid*, where Yazid's reign is discussed, the author says, "When the head was placed in front of him, Yazid cited what al-Haseen ibn al-Hamam al-Mazni had said." He qouted the second verse [in the above English text, the last couple]. Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, on p. 198, Vol. 9, of his book *Mujma al-Zawa'id wa Manba al-Fawa'id*, quotes only the second verse. On p. 61, Vol. 2, of his book *Maqtal al-Husain (ع)*, al-Khawarizmi contents himself by simply saying that they stood on the steps of the mosque's gate. These verses are cited by al-amidi on p. 91 of his book *Al-Mu'talif wal-Mukhtalif*. Then he traces the lineage of the poet al-Haseen ibn Hamam ibn Rabaah and cited three verses, including these couple, from a lengthy poem. On p. 151 of *Al-Shi'r wal-Shu'ara'*, three verses are cited which include this couple. On p. 4 of *Al-Ashya wal Nada'ir*, where immortalized ancient poems and those composed during the time of *jahiliyya* are cited, only the second verse is quoted. On p. 120, Vol. 12, of the Sassi edition of Abul-Faraj al-

They were lined up on the stairs leading to the gate leading to the [Umayyad Grand] mosque as was their custom with all captives, and the sacred head was placed in front of Yazid who kept looking at the captives and reciting poetry verses extolling his foul deed and demonstrating his elation. Then he turned to al-Numan ibn Basheer and said, "Praise to Allah Who killed him [al-Husain (ع)]." Al-Numan said, "Commander of the faithful Mu'awiyah used to hate killing him." Yazid said, "That was before he rebelled. Had he rebelled against the commander of the faithful, he would have killed him."[1]

Yazid turned to as-Sajjad (ع) and asked him, "How did you, Ali, see what Allah did to your father al-Husain (ع)?" "I saw," answered as-Sajjad (ع), "what Allah, the One and Only Allah, the most Exalted One, had decreed before creating the heavens and the earth." Yazid consulted those around him as to what to do with as-Sajjad (ع), and they advised him to kill him. Imam as-Sajjad Zain al-Abidin (ع) said, "O Yazid! These men have advised you to do the opposite of what Pharaoh's courtiers had advised Pharaoh saying, Grant him and his brother a respite.' The adiya do not kill the prophets' sons and grandsons." This statement caused Yazid to lower his head and contemplate for a good while[2].

Among the dialogue that went on between both men is Yazid quoting this Qur'anic verse to Ali ibn al-Husain (ع): "Whatever misfortune befalls you is due to what your hands commit" (Qur'an, 45:22). Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) responded by saying, "This verse was not revealed in reference to us. What was revealed in reference to us was this verse: Whatever misfortune befalls the earth or your own selves is already in a Book even before we cause it to happen; this is easy for Allah, so that you may not grieve about what you missed nor feel elated on account of what you receive' (Qur'an, 57:22)[3]. We do not grieve over what we

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Isfahani's voluminous book *Al-Aghani*, thirteen lines are quoted, including this couple.

1 al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 59.

2 al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*, p. 143 (Najafi edition).

missed nor feel elated on account of what we receive."[1] Yazid then cited the following verse by al-Fadl ibn al-Abbas ibn 'Utbah:

Wait, O cousins, wait, O masters, do not hurry!
Do not bring to surface what we did bury.[2]

Al-Sajjad, peace be with him, sought permission to speak. "Yes," said Yazid, "provided you do not utter verbal attacks." He (ع) said, "I am now standing like one who ought not verbally attack anyone, but tell me: How do you think the Messenger of Allah (ع) would have felt had he seen me looking like this?" Yazid ordered him to be untied.[3]

Yazid ordered the person who used to recite the Friday khutba to ascend the pulpit and insult Ali and al-Husain (ع), which he did. Al-Sajjad (ع) shouted at him saying, "You have traded the pleasure of the creature for the Wrath of the Creator, so take your place in the fire [of hell]."[4]

He asked Yazid saying, "Do you permit me to ascend this pulpit to deliver a speech that will please Allah Almighty and that will bring good rewards for these folks?" Yazid refused, but people kept pleading to him to yield, yet he was still relentless. His son Mu'awiyah II said to him, "Permit him; what harm can his words cause?" Yazid said, "These are people who have inherited knowledge and oratory[5] and spoon-fed

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3 al-Kamali al-Istarbadi al-Hilli, *Al-Iqd al-Farid*, Vol. 2, p. 313. At-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 267.

1 Ali ibn Ibrahim, *Tafsir*, p. 603, where the Chapter of al-Shura is discussed.

2 al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Al-Muhadarat*, Vol. 1, p. 775, in a chapter about those who boast of antagonizing their kinsfolk. This is one of five verses by al-Fadl ibn al-Abbas ibn Utbah ibn Abu Lahab recorded by Abu Tammam in his book *Al-Hamasa*. Refer to p. 223, Vol. 1, of *Sharh al-Tabrizi*.

3 Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 54.

4 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*, p. 242.

with knowledge[6]." They kept pressuring him till he agreed.
The Imam said,

ورد في كتاب فتوح ابن اعثم 5 / 247 ، ومقتل الخوارزمي 2 / 69 : إنّ يزيد أمر الخطيب أن يرقى المنبر ، ويثني على معاوية ويزيد ، وينال من الإمام علي والإمام الحسين ، فصعد الخطيب المنبر ، فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ، وأكثر الوقيعة في علي والحسين ، وأطنب في تقريض معاوية ويزيد ، فصاح به علي بن الحسين : (ويلك أيها الخاطب ، اشتريت رضا المخلوق بسخط الخالق ؟ فتبوأ مقعدك من النار). ثمّ قال : (يا يزيد ائذن لي حتى أصعد هذه الأعواد ، فأتكلم بكلمات فيهن لله رضا ، ولهؤلاء الجالسين أجر وثواب) ، فأبى يزيد ، فقال الناس : يا أمير المؤمنين ائذن له ليصعد ، فلعلنا نسمع منه شيئاً ، فقال لهم : إن صعد المنبر هذا ، لم ينزل إلا بفضيحتي ، وفضيحة آل أبي سفيان ، فقالوا : وما قدر ما يحسن هذا ؟ فقال : إنّه من أهل بيت قد زقوا العلم زقا . ولم يزالوا به حتى أذن له بالصعود ، فصعد المنبر ، فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ، وقال : (أيها الناس ، أعطينا ستاً ، وفضلنا بسبع : أعطينا العلم ، والحلم ، والسماحة والفصاحة ، والشجاعة ، والمحبة في قلوب المؤمنين ، وفضلنا بأن منا النبي المختار محمد (صلى الله عليه وآله) ، ومنا الصدّيق ، ومنا الطيار ، ومنا أسد الله وأسد الرسول ، ومنا سيدة نساء العالمين فاطمة البتول ، ومنا سبطا هذه الأمّة ، وسيدا شباب أهل الجنة ، فمن عرفني فقد عرفني ، ومن لم يعرفني أنبأته بحسبي ونسبي : أنا ابن مكة ومنى ، أنا ابن زمزم والصفا ، أنا ابن من حمل الزكاة بأطراف الرداء ، أنا ابن خير من ائتزر وارتدى ، أنا ابن خير من انتعل واحتفى ، أنا ابن خير من طاف وسعى ، أنا ابن خير من حج ولبّى ، أنا ابن من حمل على البراق في الهواء ، أنا ابن من أسري به من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى ، فسبحان من أسرى ، أنا ابن من بلغ به جبرائيل إلى سدرة المنتهى ، أنا ابن من دنا فتدلى ، فكان قاب قوسين أو أدنى ، أنا ابن من صلّى بملائكة السماء ، أنا ابن من أوحى إليه الجليل ما أوحى ، أنا ابن محمد

5 *Kamil al-Bahai*.

6 al-Qazwini, *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 148.

المصطفى ، أنا ابن من ضرب خراطيم الخلق ، حتى قالوا لا اله إلا الله ، أنا ابن من بايع البيعتين ، وصلّى القبلتين ، وقاتل ببدر وحنين ، ولم يكفر بالله طرفة عين ، يعسوب المسلمين ، وقاتل الناكثين والقاسطين والمارقين ، سمح سخي ، بهلول زكي ، ليث الحجاز ، وكبش العراق ، مكّي مدني ، أبطحي تهامي ، خيفى عقبي ، بدري أحدي ، شجري مهاجري ، أبو السبطين ، الحسن والحسين ، علي بن أبي طالب ، أنا ابن فاطمة الزهراء ، أنا ابن سيدة النساء ، أنا ابن بضعة الرسول ...) .

قال : ولم يزل يقول : أنا أنا ، حتى ضج الناس بالبكاء والنحيب ، وخشي يزيد أن تكون فتنة ، فأمر المؤذّن يؤذّن ، فقطع عليه الكلام وسكت ، فلمّا قال المؤذّن : الله أكبر. قال علي بن الحسين : كبرت كبيراً لا يقاس ، ولا يدرك بالحواس ، ولا شيء أكبر من الله؛ فلمّا قال : أشهد أن لا اله إلا الله ، قال علي : (شهد بها شعري وبشري ، ولحمي ودمي ، ومخي وعظمي) ، فلمّا قال : أشهد أن محمداً رسول الله ، التفت علي من أعلا المنبر إلى يزيد ، وقال : (يا يزيد محمد هذا جدّي أم جدّك ؟ فإن زعمت أنه جدّك فقد كذبت ، وان قلت أنه جدّي ، فلم قتلت عترته ؟) .

قال : وفرغ المؤذّن من الأذان والإقامة ، فتقدّم يزيد ، وصلّى الظهر ، فلمّا فرغ من صلاته ، أمر بعلي بن الحسين ، وأخواته وعماته (رضوان الله عليهم) ، ففرغ لهم دار فنزلوها ، وأقاموا أياماً يبكون ، وينوحون على الحسين (عليه السلام) .وبراءة الذمة...

All Praise is due to Allah for Whom there is no beginning, the ever-Lasting for Whom there is no end, the First for Whom there is no starting point, the Last for Whom there is no ending point, the One Who remains after all beings no longer exist. He measured the nights and the days. He divided them into parts; so, Blessed is Allah, the King, the all-Knowing... O people! We were granted six things and favoured with seven: We were granted knowledge, clemency, leniency, fluency, courage, and love for us in the hearts of the believers. And we were favoured by the fact that from among us came a Prophet, a Siddeeq, a Tayyar, a Lion of Allah and of His Prophet (ص), and both Masters of

the Youths of Paradise from among this nation. O people! Whoever recognizes me knows me, and whoever does not recognize me, let me tell him who I am and to what family I belong: O people! I am the son of Mecca and Mina; I am the son of Zamzam and al-Safa; I am the son of the one who carried the rukn on his mantle; I am the son of the best man who ever put on clothes and who ever made tawaf and sai, of whoever offered the hajj and pronounced the talbiya. I am the son of the one who was transported on the buraq and who was taken by Gabriel to sidrat al-muntaha, so he was near his Lord like the throw of a bow or closer still. I am the son of the one who led the angels of the heavens in the prayers. I am the son to whom the Mighty One revealed what He revealed. I am the son of the one who defended the Messenger of Allah (ع) at Badr and Hunayn and never disbelieved in Allah not even as much as the twinkling of an eye. I am the son of the best of the believers and of the heir of the prophets, of the leader of the Muslims and the noor of those who offer jihad and the killer of the renegades and those who deviated from the straight path and who scattered the ahzab and the most courageous one, the one with the firmest determination: such is the father of the grandsons of the Prophet (ص), al-Hasan and al-Husain (ع), such is Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). I am the son of Fatima al-Zahra' (ع), the Head of all Women, the son of Khadaja al-Kubra. I am the son of the one with whose blood the sand mixed. I am the son of the one who was slaughtered at Kerbala'. I am the son of the one for whom the jinns wept in the dark and for whom the birds in the air cried.

Having said this much, people's cries filled the place, and Yazid feared dissension, so he ordered the mu'aththin to call the athan for the prayers. The latter shouted: Allahu Akbar! The Imam (ع) said, Allah is Greater, more Magnanimous, and more Kind than what I fear and of what I avoid." The prayer caller now shouted: Ashhadu an la ilaha illa-Allah! He (ع) said, "Yes, I testify with everyone who testifies that there is no Allah besides Him nor any other Lord." The caller shouted: Ashahadu anna Muhammedan rasool-Allah! The Imam (ع) said to the prayer caller, "I ask you by Muhammed to stop here till I speak to this man," then he turned to Yazid and asked him, "Is this great Messenger of Allah (ع) your grandfather or mine? If you say that he is yours, everyone present here as well as all other people will come to know

that you are a liar, and if you say that he is mine, then why did you kill my father unjustly and oppressively and plundered his wealth and took his women captive? Woe unto you on the Day of Judgment when my grandfather will be your opponent."
Yazid yelled at the prayer caller to start the prayers immediately. A great deal of commotion now could be heard among the people. Some people prayed whereas others left.[1]

HUSAIN'S SEVERED HEAD

Yazid ordered al-Husain's head to be brought to him. He put it in a gold washbowl[2]. The women were behind him. Sukayna and Fatima stood and tried anxiously to steal a look at it as Yazid kept hiding it from them. When they did see it, they burst in tears[3]. He then permitted people to enter to see him[4]. Yazid took a rod and kept hitting al-Husain's lips with it[5] saying, "A day for a day: this day is [in revenge]

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1 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*, p. 242. This lengthy sermon is quoted on p. 69, Vol. 2, of al-Khawarizmi's book *Maqtal al-Husain ( )*.

2 al-Yafii, *Mir'at al-Jinan*, Vol. 1, p. 135.

3 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 35. Al-Haythami, *Mujma al-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 195. Ibn al-Sabbagh, *Al-Fusool al-Muhimmah*, p. 205.

4 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 35.

5 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 267. Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 35. Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson, *Tathkirat al-Khawass*, p. 148. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, p. 116. Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali, *Fiqh al-Hanabilah*, Vol. 3, p. 549. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Mujma al-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 195. Ibn al-Sabbagh, *Al-Fusool al-Muhimma*, p. 205. Al-Maqrazi, *Khutat*, Vol. 3, p. 289. Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 192. Al-Shareeshi, *Sharh Maqamat al-Harari*, Vol. 1, p. 193, at the end of the 10th *maqam*. Muhammed Abul-Fadl and Ali Muhammed al-Bijawi, *Ayyam al-Arab fil Islam*, p. 435. Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Al-Manaqib*, Vol. 2, p. 225. According to p. 23 of *Al-Ithaf bi Hubbil-Ashraf*, Yazid kept hitting al-Husain's front teeth, and so is stated by al-Bayrani on p. 331 of the offset edition of his book *Al-athar al-Baqiya*.

for Badr[1]." Then he cited these verses by al-Haseen ibn al-Hamam:[2]

To be fair to us our folks never did dare,
So swords dripping with blood were to them fair;
We split the heads of men dear to us
For they severed their ties and did oppress.

Abu Barzah al-Aslami said, "I bear witness that I saw the Prophet (ص) kissing his lips and those of his brother al-Hasan (ع) and say to them: You are the masters of the youths of Paradise; may Allah fight whoever fights you; may He curse him and prepare hell for him, and what an evil refuge it is!'" Yazid became angry and ordered him to be dragged out of his courtroom[3].

A [Christian] messenger sent by emperor Caesar was present there; he said to Yazid, "We have in some islands the hoof of the donkey upon which Jesus rode, and we make a pilgrimage to it every year from all lands and offer nathr to it and hold it in as much regard as you hold

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1 Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Al-Manaqib*, Vol. 2, p. 226.

2 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 35. Ibn al-Sabbagh, *Al-Fusool al-Muhimma*, p. 205. The first line, according to p. 135, Vol. 1, of al-Yafii's *Mir'at al-Jinan*, is:

> We took to patience, so patience proved to be our will
> Even as our swords kept severing hands and arms.

It is narrated by Sabt ibn al-Jawzi on p. 148 of his book *Tathkirat al-Khawass* with some variation in its wording. A host of historians have contented themselves by citing only the second verse. Among them is al-Shareeshi who does so on p. 193, Vol. 1, of his book *Sharh Maqamat al-Harari*, so does al-alasi on p. 313, Vol. 2, of his book *Al-Iqd al-Farid*. So does Ibn Katheer on p. 197, Vol. 8, of his book *Al-Bidaya*, the mentor Shaikh al-Mufid in his book *Al-Irshad*, and so does Ibn Jarir at-Tabari on p. 267, Vol. 6, of his *Tarikh*, adding that the verse was composed by al-Haseen ibn al-Hamam al-Murri.

3 Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 102. The incident is abridged on p. 205 of *Al-Fusool al-Muhimma*, on p. 267, Vol. 6, of at-Tabari's *Tarikh*, and on p. 26, Vol. 2, of Ibn Shahr Ashub's book *Al-Manaqib*.

your sacred books; so, I bear witness that you are wrongdoers."[1] This statement enraged Yazid who ordered him to be killed. The messenger stood up, walked to the head, kissed it and pronounced the kalima. At the moment when that messenger's head was cut off, everyone heard a loud and fluent voice saying, La hawla wala quwwata illa billah! (There is neither power nor might except in Allah).[2]

The head was taken out of the court and hung for three days on the mansion's gate[3]. When Hind daughter of Amr ibn Suhayl, Yazid's wife, saw the head on her house's door[4] with divine light emanating from it, its blood still fresh and had not yet dried, and it was emitting a sweet fragrance[5], she entered Yazid's court without any veil crying, "The head of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ع) is on our door!" Yazid stood up, covered her and said, "Mourn him, O Hind, for he is the reason why Banu Hashim are grieving. [Ubaydullah] Ibn Ziyad hastily killed him."[6]

Yazid ordered the heads to be hung on the gates and on the Umayyad Mosque, and his order was carried out[7].
Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] was very happy about al-Husain (ع) being

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1 Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, p. 119.

2 al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 151. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*. On p. 72, Vol. 2, of his book *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, al-Khawarizmi states the dialogue between the Christian and Yazid and how the first was killed, but he does not indicate that the most sacred head spoke.

3 al-Maqrazi, *Al-Khutat*, Vol. 2, p. 289. *Al-Ithaf bi Hubbil-Ashraf*, p. 23. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 75. Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 204. *Siyar Alam al-Nubala'*, Vol. 3, p. 216.

4 al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 151. In the Introduction to this book, her father is introduced to the reader and so is her husband.

5 al-Maqrazi, *Al-Khutat*, Vol. 2, p. 284.

6 al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 74.

7 Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafas al-Mahmum*, p. 247.

killed, so he composed poetry lines and kept hitting al-Husain's face with a rod.

A SYRIAN ENCOUNTERS FATIMA

Historians record that a Syrian looked at Fatima daughter of Ali (ع)[1] then asked Yazid to give her to him to serve him. This daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (ع) was terrified; she clung to her sister Zainab and said, "Serve him?! How could I do that?!" Zainab said to her, "Do not be concerned; this shall never happen at all." Hearing her, Yazid said, "It could if I would!" She said to him, "Not unless you renege from our religion." He answered her by saying, "Those who reneged from the religion are your father and your brother." Zainab said, "By Allah's religion and the religion of my grandfather do I swear that it was through my father and brother that you and your father received guidance, had you been a Muslim at all." He said to her, "You lie, you enemy of Allah!" She, peace be with her, toned down her language and said to him, "You are an emir over the destiny of people; you oppressively taunt and subdue others."[2] The same Syrian man repeated his plea to Yazid who now rebuked him and said, "May Allah grant you a fate that will put an end to you!"[3]

ZAINAB DELIVERS ANOTHER SPEECH

Both Ibn Nama and Ibn Tawoos[4] say that Zainab daughter of Ali ibn Abu Talib[5] (ع) heard Yazid quoting the following verses by Ibn al-

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1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6. Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 194. Al-Saduq, *Al-Aamali*, p. 100, *majlis* 31. Both Ibn Nama, on p. 54 of his *Muthir al-Ahzan*, and al-Khawarizmi, on p. 62, Vol. 2, of his *Maqtal al-Husain (ع)*, say that she was Fatima daughter of al-Husain (ع).

2 Ibn al-Atheer, Vol. 4, p. 35.

3 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 265.

4 This sermon is documented on p. 21 of *Balaghat al-Nisa* ' (Najafi edition), and on p. 64, Vol. 2, of al-Khawarizmi's book *Maqtal al-Husain (ع)*.

5 In his book *Maqtal al-Husain (ع)*, al-Khawarizmi identifies her mother as Fatima (ع) daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ع).

Zubari[6]:

I wish my forefathers at Badr had witnessed
How the Khazraj are by the thorns annoyed,
They would have Glorified and Unified Allah
Then they would make tahleel and say in elation:
"May your hands, O Yazid, never be paralyzed!"
We have killed the masters of their chiefs
And equated it with Badr, and it was so, indeed
Hashim played with the dominion so indeed,
No news came, nor was there a revelation revealed.
I do not belong to Khandaf if I do not
Seek revenge from Ahmed's children
For what he to us had done.

She reacted to these lines and said the following:

All Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. Allah has blessed His Messenger and all His Messenger's Progeny. Allah, Glory to Him, has said the truth when He said, "Then the end of those who committed evil was that they disbelieved in Allah's Signs and they were ridiculing them." (Qur'an, 30:10) Do you, O Yazid, think that when you blocked all the avenues before us, so we were driven as captives, that we are light in the sight of Allah and that you are superior to us? Or is it because you enjoy with Him a great status, so you look down at us and become arrogant, elated, when you see the world submissive to you and things are done as you want them, and when our authority and power became all yours? But wait! Have you forgotten that Allah has said, "Do not regard those who disbelieved that We grant them good for themselves? We only give them a respite so that they may increase

6 These verses are attributed by Ibn Tawoos to Ibn al-Jubari, as he so states on p. 102 of his book *Al-Luhuf*, but they are not all his. Al-Khawarizmi on p. 66, Vol. 2, of his book *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Ibn Abul-Hadid on p. 383, Vol. 3, of his book *Sharh Nahjul Balagha* (first Egyptian edition), and Ibn Hisham in his *Seerat*, where he discusses the Battle of Uhud, all state sixteen lines which do not include except the first and the third lines mentioned by Ibn Tawoos. Al-Bayrani cites all of them on p. 331 of the offset edition of his book *Al-athar al-Baqiya*, excluding the fourth line.

their sins, and for them there is a humiliating torment" (Qur'an, 3:178)? Is it fair, O son of taleeqs, that you keep your free as well as slave women in their chambers and at the same time drive the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (ع) as captives with their veils removed and faces exposed, taken by their enemies from one land to another, being viewed by those at watering places as well as those who man your forts, with their faces exposed to the looks of everyone near or distant, lowly or honourable, having none of their protectors with them nor any of their men? But what can be expected from one [descended from those] whose mouths chewed the livers of the purified ones and whose flesh grows out of the blood of the martyrs? How can it be expected that one who looks at us with grudge and animosity, with hatred and malice, would not hate us, we Ahl al-Bayt (ع)? Besides you, without feeling any guilt or weighing heavily what you say, you recite saying,

Then they would make tahleel and say in elation:
"May your hands, O Yazid, never be paralyzed!"

How dare you hit the lips of Abu Abdullah (ع), the Master of the Youths of Paradise? But why should you not do so, since you stirred a wound that almost healed, and since all mercy is removed from your heart, having shed the blood of the offspring of Muhammed, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his Progeny, and the stars on earth from among the family of Abdul-Muttalib? Then you cite your mentors as if you speak to them... Soon shall you be lodged with them, and soon shall you wish you were paralyzed and muted and never said what you said nor did what you did. O Allah! Take what belongs to us out of his hands, seek revenge against all those who oppressed us, and let Your Wrath descend upon whoever shed our blood and killed our protectors! By Allah! You have burnt only your own skin! You have cut only your own flesh! You shall come face to face with the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his Progeny, bearing the burdens of the blood which you have shed, the blood of his offspring, and of his sanctities which you violated, the sanctities of his women, his kinsfolk, his flesh and blood, when Allah gathers them together and seeks equity on their behalf. "And do not reckon those who are slain in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay! They are living with their Lord, receiving their sustenance" (Qur'an, 3:169). Allah suffices you as your Judge and

Muhammed, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, as your opponent, and Gabriel as your foe. All those who instigated you to do what you did and who put you in charge so that you might play havoc with the lives of the Muslims, how evil the end of the oppressors is and which of you shall have the worst place and will be the least protected? Although calamities have forced me to speak to you, I nevertheless see you small in my eyes and find your verbal attacks great, and I regard your rebuke too much to bear, but these eyes are tearful, and the chests are filled with depression. What is even more strange is that the honoured Party of Allah is being killed by the taleeq party of Satan. Such hands are dripping with our blood; such mouths are feeding on our flesh, while those sacred and pure corpses are offered as food to the wild beasts of the desert and are dirtied by the brutes. If you regard us as your booty, you shall soon find us as your opponents, that will be when you find nothing but what your hands had committed, and your Lord never treats His servants unjustly. To Allah is my complaint, and upon Him do I rely. So scheme whatever you wish to scheme, and carry out your plots, and intensify your efforts, for by Allah, you shall never be able to obliterate our mention, nor will you ever be able to kill our inspiration, nor will your shame ever be washed away. Your view shall be proven futile, your days numbered, and your wealth wasted on the Day when the caller calls out, "The curse of Allah be upon the oppressors" (Qur'an, 11:18). All Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Who sealed the life of our early ones with happiness and forgiveness, and that of our last with martyrdom and mercy. We plead to Allah to complete His rewards for them and grant them an increase and make succession good for us; He is the most Merciful, the most Compassionate. Allah suffices us, and how great He is!

Yazid responded to her speech by quoting a couplet of poetry demonstrating his excitement. This should not surprise anyone. Anyone who is familiar with Yazid and with his misguidance cannot be surprised at all to hear him asking with a full mouth the Syrian jackels around him: "Do you know where Fatima's son came from, and what prompted him to do what he did and to fall into the pitfalls of what he committed?" They answered in the negative. Said he, "He claims that his father is better than my father, that his mother Fatima (ع) daughter

of the Messenger of Allah (ع) is better than mine, that his grandfather (ع) is better than mine, and that he is more worthy than me of taking charge. As regarding his saying that his father is better than my father, my father had asked Allah, the Great, the Sublime, to arbitrate between them, and people know best in whose favour He ruled. As regarding his saying that his mother is better than mine, by my life, Fatima (ع), daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ع), is better than my mother. As regarding his saying that his grandfather (ع) is better than my grandfather, by my life, nobody who believes in Allah and in the Last Day can find anyone among us equal to the Messenger of Allah (ع). But he speaks with a little understanding of what he says and has not read the verse saying, Say: Lord! Owner of the domain! You grant authority to whomsoever You please, and you take the authority from whomsoever You please; You exalt whomsoever You please, and You abase whomsoever You please,' (Qur'an, 3:26) and he did not read the verse saying, Allah grants His domain to whomsoever He pleases.' (Qur'an, 2:247)"[1].

AT THE HOUSE OF RUINS

The speech quoted above, which was delivered by Zainab, shook the very foundations of Yazid's court, and people started discussing with one another as to what extent they had been misled, and in what valley of abyss they had been hurled. Yazid had no choice except to get the women out of his court and to lodge them at a house of ruins which could not protect them against any heat or any cold. They remained there weeping and wailing, mourning al-Husain (ع)[2] for three days[3].

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1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 266. Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya*, Vol. 8, p. 195.

2 Ibn Tawoos *Al-Luhuf*, p. 207. al-Saduq, *Al-Aamali*, p. 101, *majlis* 31.

3 al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 34. This shed, or say jail, as stated on p. 146, Vol. 4, of al-Yunini's *Mir'at al-Zaman*, where the events of the year 681 A.H./1283 A.D. are discussed. Says he, "On the eleventh night of the month of Ramadan, the felt market in Damascus caught fire and was burnt in its entirety, and the fire engulfed the Booksellers' Bridge, the fountain square, and the cloth market known as Saq AsAllah, as well as the watering area of Jayrun. The fire reached the Ajam street in the midst of Jayrun, scorching the wall of the Omeri Mosque adjacent to the jail were Zain al-Abidin (ع) had been jailed."

One evening as-Sajjad (ع) went out for a walk. Al-Minhal ibn Omer met him and asked him, "How have you received the evening, O son of the Messenger of Allah (ع)?" "We have received the evening," the Imam (ع) answered, "like the Israelites among the people of Pharaoh: they kill their sons and take their women captive. The Arabs brag before the non-Arabs saying that Muhammed (ص) was one of them, while Quraish boasts before the rest of the Arabs of Muhammed (ص) belonging to it. We, his Ahl al-Bayt (ع), are now homeless; so, to Allah do we belong, and to Him shall we all return."[1] Al-Minhal is quoted as saying, "While he was thus talking to me, a woman came out after him and said, Where are you going, O best of successors?' He left me and hurried back to her. I inquired about her, and I was told that she was his aunt Zainab (ع)."[2]

BACK TO MEDINA

Yazid was very happy about killing al-Husain (ع) and those with him as well as the capture of the ladies who descended from the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny[3]. He was seen at his court looking very excited, being unaware of the fact that he was an atheist and an apostate as testified by his own citing of the poetry of al-Zubari quoted above to the extent that he denied that the Messenger of Allah Muhammed (ص) had ever received any revelation. But when he was rebuked by more and more people, it gradually appeared to him how he had failed and erred in what he had committed: a sin the like of which had never been committed by anyone who belongs to the Islamic creed. It was then that he realized the implication of Mu'awiyah's will to him wherein he said, "The people of Iraq shall not leave al-Husain (ع) till they pressure him to revolt. If he rebels against you, forgive him, for he was begotten in sacred wombs, and he enjoys a lofty status."[4]

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1 Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 58. Al-Khawarizmi, *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, Vol. 2, p. 72.

2 *Al-Anwar al-Numainiyya*, p. 340.

3 al-Sayyati, *Tarikh al-Khulafa*, p. 139.

4 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 180.

His closest courtiers, and even his family members and women, stayed away from him. He heard the statements uttered by the most sacred severed head when he ordered the messenger of the Roman emperor to be killed: *La hawla wala quwwata illa billah!* (There is neither power nor might except in Allah).[1]

Yazid's most abominable crime and extreme cruelty were now being discussed at every gathering, and such discussions were finding an echo throughout Damascus. Yazid at that juncture had no choice except to shift the blame to the shoulder of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad in order to distance the taunting from him, but what is already established cannot be removed.

When he feared dissension and repercussions, he rushed to get as-Sajjad and the children out of Syria and to send them back home. He carried out their wishes, ordering al-Nu'man ibn Basheer and a number of other men with him to escort them to Medina and to treat them with kindness[2].

When they reached Iraq, they asked the road guide to take the highway leading to Kerbala'. They reached the place where al-Husain (ع) had been martyred. There, they found Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari accompanied by a group of Banu Hashim and some of the family members of the Messenger of Allah (ع). They had all gone there to visit al-Husain's grave. They met each other weeping and grieving, beating their cheeks. They stayed there mourning al-Husain (ع)[3] for three days.[4]

Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari stood at the grave and burst in tears then thrice called out al-Husain's name, then he said, "Why a loved one does not answer one who loves him?" But soon he answered his own query

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1 al-Bahrani, *Maqtal al-Awalim*, p. 150.

2 al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*.

3 Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 112. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 79 (old edition).

4 Muhammed Hasan al-Qazwini, *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 157.

by saying, "How can he answer while his cheeks are torn and his head is separated from his body? Yet I testify that you are the son of the Seal of Prophets (ع), the son of the master of the faithful (ع), the son of the inseparable ally of piety, the descendant of guidance, the fifth of the fellows of the kisa', the son of the master of naqeebs, the one who was brought up in the lap of the pious, that you were raised on the milk of iman, that you were weaned with Islam, so you were good when you were alive, and you are so when dead. But the hearts of the faithful are not pleased with parting with you, nor do they have any doubt about goodness being yours. So peace of Allah be upon you and His Pleasure. And I bear witness that you treaded the same path treaded before you by your brother [prophet] Zachariyya."

Having said so, Jabir turned his head around the grave as he said, "Assalamo Alaikom, O souls that abide at al-Husain's courtyard! I bear witness that you upheld the prayers and paid the zakat, enjoined what is right and prohibited what is wrong, struggled against the atheists and adored Allah till death overtook you. By the One Who sent Muhammed, peace of Allah be upon him and his Progeny, as His Prophet sent with the truth, I testify that we have a share in what you have earned." Atiyyah al-'Awfi [his companion[1] who was leading him, since he, a maternal relative and one of the greatest sahabis of Prophet Muhammed (ص), as indicated above in a footnote, was by then a blind old man] asked him, "How so when we did not descend upon a valley nor ascend a mountain, nor did we strike with a sword, whereas the heads of these people have been severed from their bodies, their sons have been orphaned and their wives widowed?" Jabir answered: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ع) whom I very much love saying, One who loves a people will be lodged with them, and one who loves what some people do will have a share in [the rewards of] their deeds.' By the One Who sent Muhammed (ص) as a Prophet with the truth, my intention and that of my companions is similar to that for which al-Husain (ع) and his companions were all killed."[2]

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1 Some accounts say that Atiyyah was his slave.

2 Abu Ja'far Muhammed ibn Abul-Qasim ibn Muhammed ibn Ali at-Tabari al-Amili, *Bisharat al-Mustafa*, p. 89 (Hayderi Press edition). This author is one of the 5th century A.H./11th century A.D. scholars who were tutored by

THE SEVERED HEAD REJOINS ITS BODY

Once Zain al-Abidin (ع) came to know of Yazid's consent, he asked him for the heads so that he could bury them. Yazid showed no hesitation to do so, ordering the heads, including those of Zain al-Abidin's family members, to be handed over to him. Zain al-Abidin reunited them with their respective bodies.

The list of writers of biographies who recorded his bringing the heads to Kerbala' includes Shaikh Abbas al-Qummi, author of *Nafas al-Mahmum*, who discusses this issue on p. 253 of his book, and it is also discussed on p. 155 of Riyad al-Ahzan of Muhammed Hasan al-Sha'ban Kurdi al-Qazwani.

As regarding al-Husain's head, we read about it on p. 165 of al-Fattal's book *Rawdat al-Wa'izeen*, and on p. 85 of *Muthir al-Ahzan* by Ibn Nama al-Hilli. The latter reference is the one the Shi'as consider as the most accurate as stated on p. 112 of *Al-Luhuf* by Ibn Tawoos. On p. 151 of al-Tibrisi's book *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda*, as well as on p. 154 of *Maqtal al-'Awalim*, as is the case with both *Riyad al-Musa'ib* and *Bihar al-Anwar*, the same view is the most famous among scholars. On p. 200, Vol. 2, of his book titled *Al-Manaqib*, Ibn Shahr Ashub says, "In some of his letters, al-Murtada has stated that al-Husain's head was reunited with its body in Kerbala'." At-Tusi has said that that incident was the basis for *ziyarat al-arba'een*. The author of *Bihar al-Anwar* cites *Al-Udad al-Qawiyya* by the brother of allama al-Hilli. On p. 67 of his book *Aja'ib al-Makhlooqat*, al-Qazwani indicates that it was on the twentieth of Safar that al-Husain's head was returned to its body. Al-Shabrawi says, "The head was returned to the body after forty days."[1] According to Ibn Hajar's book Sharh al-Bawsari's Hamziyya[2], forty days after his martyrdom, al-Husain's head was returned [to its body]. Sabt ibn al-Jawzi has said, "It is most widely known that it [the

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Shaikh at-Tusi's son.

1 al-Shabrawi, *Al-Ithaf bi Hubbil-Ashraf*, p. 12.

2 "Hamziyya" means a poem the rhyme of which ends with a *hamza*.

head] was returned to Kerbala' and buried with the body."[1] On p. 57, Vol. 1, of his book Al-Kawakib al-Durriyya, al-Qatari al-Biladi al-Bahrani records the consensus among Imamite Shi'as that the head was returned to Kerbala', and that this view was the one accepted by al-Qurtubi. He did not list his sources but attributed it to "some people of knowledge as well as eye witnesses," becoming evident to him that the head was, indeed, returned to Kerbala'. Abul-Rayhan al-Bayruni states that it was on the twentieth of Safar that al-Husain's head was reunited and buried with its body.[2]

Based on the above, any statements to the contrary should not be taken seriously especially those claiming that he was buried with his father (ع), a claim with which the scholars mentioned above are familiar and which they all discard. Their rejection of such a claim proves that it cannot be relied upon especially since its isnad is not complete and its narrators are not famous.

THE ARBAEEN

It is customary to pay tribute to a deceased person forty days after his death by doing acts of righteousness on his behalf, by eulogizing him and enumerating his merits. This is done at organized gatherings in order to keep his memory alive just when people's minds start to forget about him and their hearts start to ignore him. Thus, he remains alive in people's minds.

Both Abu Tharr al-Ghifari and Ibn Abbas[3] quote the Prophet (ص) saying, "The earth mourns the death of a believer for forty mornings."[4] Zurarah quotes Abu Abdullah Imam al-Sadiq (ع) saying, "The sky wept

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1 Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson, *Tathkirat al-Khawass*, p. 150.

2 *Al-Athar al-Baqiya*, Vol. 1, p. 331.

3 His full name is: Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib, a cousin of the Prophet of Islam (ص). He is known as the Islamic nation's scholar. The traditions of the Prophet which he reported fill the Sahih books. He died in Ta'if in 68 A.H./687 A.D. after having lost his eye-sight.

4 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 2, p. 679.

over al-Husain (ع) for forty mornings with blood, while the earth wept over him for forty mornings with blackness. The sun wept over him for forty mornings with an eclipse and with redness, whereas the angels wept over him for forty mornings. No woman among us ever dyed with henna, nor used any oil, nor any kohl nor cohabited with her husband till the head of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad was brought to us, and we are still grieving even after all of that."[1]
This is the basis of the ongoing custom of grieving for the deceased for forty days. On the fourtieth day, a special mourning ceremony is held at his grave-site attended by his relatives and friends. This custom is not confined to Muslims. Adherents of other creeds hold commemorative mourning ceremonies for their lost ones. Some gather at a church and conduct a special funeral prayer service. Jews renew their mourning service thirty days after one's death, nine months after one's death, and one year after one's death[2]. All of this is done in order to keep his memory alive and so that people may not forget his legacy and deeds if he is one of the great ones with merits and feats.

At any rate, a researcher does not find in the band described as reformers a man so well shrouded in feats of the most sublime meanings, one whose life, uprising, and the tragic way in which he was killed..., a divine call and lessons in reform, even social systems, ethics, and sacred morals..., other than the master of the youths of Paradise, the man who was martyred for his creed, for Islam, for harmony, the martyr for ethics and cultivation, namely al-Husain (ع). He, more than anyone else, deserves to be remembered on various occasions. People ought to make a pilgrimage to his sacred grave-site on the anniversary of the passage of 40 days since the date of his martyrdom so that they may achieve such lofty objectives.

The reason why most people hold only the first such an anniversary is due to the fact that the merits of those men are limited and temporal, unlike those of the Master of Martyrs: his feats are endless, his virtues are coutless. The study of his life and martyrdom keeps his memory alive, and so is the case whenever he is mentioned. To follow in his

1 al-Nawari, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, p. 215, chapter 94.

2 *Nahr al-Thahab fi Tarikh Halab*, Vol. 1, pp. 63 and 267.

footsteps is needed by every generation. To hold an annual ceremony at his grave on the anniversary of his Arbaeen brings his revolution back to memory. It also brings back to memory the cruelty committed by the Umayyads and their henchmen. No matter how hard an orator tries, or how well a poet presents his theme, new doors of virtue, which were closed before, will then be opened.

This is why it has been the custom of the Shi'as to bring back to memory on the Arbaeen those events every year. The tradition wherein Imam al-Baqir (ع) says that the heavens wept over al-Husain (ع) for forty mornings, rising red and setting red[1], hints to such a public custom.

So is the case with a statement made once by Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari (ع) wherein he said, "There are five marks for a believer: his fifty-one rek'at prayers, ziyarat al-arbaeen, his audible recitation of the basmala, his wearing his ring on the right hand, and his rubbing his forehead with the dust."[2]

Such a statement leads us to the ongoing public custom being discussed. Holding a mourning ceremony for the Master of Martyrs and holding meetings in his memory are all done by those who are loyal to him and who follow him. There is no doubt that those who follow his path are the believers who recognize him as their Imam; so, one of the marks highligting their iman, as well as their loyalty to the master of the youths of Paradise, the one who was killed as he stood to defend the divine Message, is to be present on the Arbaeen anniversary at his sacred grave in order to hold a mourning ceremony for him and remember the tragedies that had befallen him and his companions and Ahl al-Bayt (ع).

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1 al-Qummi, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, p. 90, chapter 28.

2 This is narrated by Shaikh at-Tusi on p. 17, Vol. 3, of his *Tahthib*, in a chapter discussing the merits of visiting the grave-site of al-Husain (ع) wherein he quotes Imam “Abu Muhammed” al-Hasan al-'Askari, peace be with him. It is also narrated on p. 551 of the Indian edition of *Musbah al-Mutahajjid*.

To twist the meaning of ziyarat al-arbaeen by saying that it means visiting the grave-sites of forty believers is simply indicative of twisted minds, an attempt at distortion, one which good taste resents. Moreover, it is without any foundation. Had the goal been to visit forty believers, the Imam (ع) would have used the term "ziyarat arbaeen [mu'mineen]." The original wording indicates that ziyarat al-arbaeen is one of the conditions enumerated in the hadith cited above saying that it is one of the marks of one's iman and an indication of his loyalty to the Twelve Imams (ع).

All the Imams who descended from the Prophet (ص) were the gates of salvation, the arks of mercy. Through them can a believer be distinguished from a non-believer. They all left this world after being killed as they stood to defend the divine Message, accepting the possibility of their being killed for the stand which they took in obedience to the Command of their Lord, Glory to Him, the One Who sent His wahi to their grandfather the Prophet (ص). Father of Muhammed, al-Hasan (ع) son of the Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع), has pointed out to this fact saying, "The mission which we undertake is assigned to Twelve Imams (ع) each one of whom is either to be killed or poisoned."

For all of these reasons, the Imams from among the Prophet's Progeny (ع) found no alternative to attracting the attention to such a glorious revolution because it contains tragedies that would split the hardest of rocks. They knew that persistence in demonstrating the injustice dealt to al-Husain (ع) would stir the emotions and attract the hearts of sympathizers. One who hears the tales of such horrible events will come to conclude that al-Husain (ع) was a fair and just Imam who did not succumb to lowly things, that his Imamate was inherited from his grandfather the Prophet (ص) and from his father the wasi (ع), that whoever opposes him deviates from the path of equity. Whoever absorbs the fact that right was on al-Husain's side and on that of his infallible offspring would be embracing their method and following their path.

This is why the Imams (ع) did not urge the holding of mourning ceremonies for the Arbaeen anniversary of any of them, not even for

that of the Prophet of Islam (ع), so that it alone would be the memory of his tragedy that would make a strong case for safeguarding the link with the creed. Turning attention to it is more effective in keeping the cause of the Infallible Ones dear to all those who discuss it: "Keep our cause alive, and discuss our cause."

The kind reader, anyway, can easily see why ziyarat al-arbaeen is an indication of one's iman when he gets to know similar indications to which the hadith has referred.

The first of such marks, namely the 51-*rek'at* prayers, legislated during the night of the Prophet's *mi'raj*, and which, through the Prophet's intercession, were reduced to only five during the day and the night, are: seventeen *rek'at* for the morning, the noon and the afternoon, the sunset and the evening, and the nafl prayers timed with them, in addition to night's nafl prayers: they all make up thirty-four: eight before the noon-time prayers, eight befor the after-noon prayers, four after sunset prayers, and two after the evening prayers regarded as one, and two before the morning prayers, and finally eleven rek'at for the night's nafl prayers. Add to them the shaf and witr rek'at, and you will come to a total of obligatory and optional prayers of fifty-one rek'at. This is applicable to the Shi'as only. Although they agree with the Shi'as with regard to the number of obligatory *rek'at*, the Sunnis differ when it comes to optional prayers. On p. 314, Vol. 1, of Ibn Humam al-Hanafi's book *Fath al-Qadeer*, they are: two rek'at before the fajr prayers, four before the noon prayers and two after that, four before the afternoon prayers, or just two rek'at, two more after the sunset prayers and four thereafter, or just two, making up twenty-three *rek'at*. They differ about the night's nafl prayers whether they ought to be eight, only two, or thirteen, or even more. Hence, the total of optional and compulsory *rek'at* will in no case be fifty-one; so, the fifty-one rek'at are relevant to the Imamite Shi'as only.

The second on the list of marks referred to in the said hadith is the audible pronunciation of the *basmala*. Imamites seek nearness to Allah, the most Exalted One, by making it obligatory to pronounce it audibly in the audible prayers and voluntary in the inaudible ones, following the text of their Imams (ع). In this regard, al-Fakhr ar-Razi says, "Shi'as

are of the view that it is a Sunnah to audibly pronounce the *basmala* in the audible prayers as well as the inaudible ones, whereas the majority of faqihs differ from them. It is proven through tawatur that Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) used to audibly pronounce the *basmala*. Anyone who follows Ali (ع) in as far as his creed is concerned will surely be on the right guidance by token of the *hadith* saying, O Allah! Let right be with Ali wherever he goes.'"[1] This statement of ar-Razi was not digested by Abul-Thana' al-Alasi who followed it with his comment in which he said, "Had anyone acted upon all what they claim to be mutawatir from the Commander of the Faithful (ع), he will surely be an apostate; so, there is no alternative to believing in some and disbelieving in others. His claim that anyone who emulates Ali (ع) in as far as his creed is concerned will be on the right guidance of Islam is accepted without any discussion so long as we are sure that it is proven as having been said by Ali, peace be with him. Anything else besides that is steam."[2]

Shi'as are not harmed when al-'Alasi and others assault them especially since their feet are firm on the path of loyalty for the master of wasis (ع) to whom the Messenger of Allah (ع) says, "O Ali! Nobody knows Allah, the most Exalted One, (fully well) except I and you, and nobody knows me (full welly) except Allah and you, and nobody knows you (fully well) except Allah and I."[3]

Sunnis have opted to do the opposite with regard to such a pronouncement. On p. 478, Vol. 1, of Ibn Qudamah's book *Al-Mughni*, and also on p. 204, Vol. 1, of *Badai' al-Sanai'* by al-Kasani, and also on p. 216, Vol. 1, of al-Zarqani's *Sharh* of Abul-Diya's *Mukhtasar* of Malik's *fiqh*, audible pronouncement is not a Sunnah in the prayers.

The third mark mentioned in the said hadith, that is, wearing a ring in the right hand, is something practiced religiously by the Shi'as on account of the traditions they quote from their Imams (ع). A multitude among the Sunnis disagrees with them. Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Maliki has said,

1 *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

2 *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 1, p. 47.

3 *Al-Muhtadir*, p. 165.

"The Sunnah has recorded everything as abominable if handed by the left hand and everything tahir if handed by the right. In this sense, it is highly recommended to wear a ring in the left hand to be taken by the right one and then placed on the left."[1] Ibn Hajar narrates saying that Malik hated to wear a ring on his right hand, believing it should be worn on the left[2]. Shaikh Isma'eel al-Barusawi has said the following in Iqd al-Durr: "Originally, it was a Sunnah to wear a ring on the right hand, but since this is the distinguishing mark of the people of *bid'as*, innovations, and of injustice, it became a Sunnah in our time to place the ring on a finger on the left hand."[3]

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1 *Al-Madkhal*, Vol. 1, p. 46, in a chapter dealing with the etiquette of entering mosques.

2 *Al-Fatawa al-Fiqhiyya al-Kubra*, Vol. 1, p. 264, in a chapter dealing with what to wear.

3 This is narrated by the authority Shaikh Abdul-Husain (ع) Ahmed al-Amini al-Najafi in his 11-volume encyclopedia titled *Al-Ghadir* quoting p. 142, Vol. 4, of the exegesis titled *Ruh al-Bayan*. This is not the first issue wherein Sunnis practice the opposite of what the Shi'as practice. On p. 137, Vol. 1, of Abu Ishaq al-Sharazi's book *Al-Muhaththab*, on p. 47, Vol. 1, of al-Ghazali's book *Al-Wajeeza*, on p. 25 of al-Nawawi's *Al-Minhaj* as well as on p. 560, Vol. 1, of its *Sharh* by Ibn Hajar titled *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj fi Sharh al-Minhaj*, on p. 248, Vol. 4, of al-Ayni's book *Umdat al-Qari fi Sharh al-Bukhari*, on p. 681, Vol. 1, of Ibn Muflih's book *Al-Furoo*, and on p. 505, Vol. 2, of Ibn Qudamah's book *Al-Mughni*, planing graves is looked upon as a mark of innovators. On p. 88, Vol. 1, of al-Sharani's book *Rahmat al-Ummah bi Ikhtilaf al-A'immah*, a book written as a comment on the exegesis titled *Al-Mizan* by *allama* Tabatabai, the author states the following: "It is a Sunnah to plane graves. But since it became a distinguishing mark for the Rafidis, it is better to do contrariwise." Among other issues wherein Sunnis do the opposite of what the Shi'as do is blessing the Prophet (ص) and his progeny (ع). Some of them suggest its elimination altogether. For example, al-Zamakhshari states the following comment after being tried to explain verse 56 of Surat al-Ahzab in his book *Al-Kashshaf*: "It is *makrooh* to bless the Prophet (ص) because it causes one to be charged with being a Rafidi, especially since he [the Prophet {P}] has said, Do not stand where you may be prone to being charged.'" The same theme exists on p. 135, Vol. 11, of Ibn Hajar's book *Fath al-Bari*, in "Kitab al-Daawat" (book of supplications), where the author tries to answer the question: "Should one bless anyone else besides the Prophet (ص)?" Says

The fourth mark mentioned in the said *hadith* is the placing of the forehead on dust [or dry soil]. Its message is to demonstrate that during the sajda, the forehead has to be placed on the ground. Sunnis do not place their forehead on the ground. Abu Haneefa, Malik, and Ahmed are reported as having authorized the prostrating on turban coils[1], or on a piece of garment[2] worn by the person performing the prayers or any piece of cloth. Hanafis have authorized placing it on the palms if one feels grudgingly that he has no other choice[3]. They also permit prostrating on wheat and barley, on a bed, on the back of another person standing in front of you who is also performing the same prayers![4]

The objective behind such a reference is that it is highly commendable, when one prostrates to thank Allah, to rub his forehead on the dust as a symbol of humility and to shun arrogance. An examination of the original text will show any discreet person that it is equally commendable to rub both sides of the face on it.

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he, "There is a disagreement with regard to blessing anyone besides the prophets although there is a consensus that it is permissive to greet the Living One. Some say it is permissive in its absolute application, while others say it is conditional because it has become a distinguishing mark of the Rafidis." Even in the manner of dressing do some Sunnis want to distinguish themselves from others: On p. 13, Vol. 5, of al-Zarqani's book *Sharh al-Mawahib al-Saniyya*, it is stated that, "Some scholars used to loosen their tassels from the left front side, and I have never read any text that a tassel should be loosened from the right side except in a weak *hadith* narrated by al-Tabrani. Now since this has become a distinguishing mark of the Imamites, it ought to be abandoned in order to avoid looking like them." Imagine! Notice the prejudice and the narrow-mindedness!

1 al-Sharani, *Al-Mizan*, Vol. 1, p. 138.

2 al-Marghinani, *Al-Hidaya*, Vol. 1, p. 33.

3 Abdul-Rahman al-Jazari, *Al-Fiqh ala al-Mathahib al-Arba'ah*, Vol. 1, p. 189.

4 Ibn Najeem, *Al-Bahr al-Ra'iq*, Vol. 1, p. 319.

Rubbing the cheeks exists when reference is made to sajdat al-shukr[1], something whereby prophet Moses son of Imran [Amram] (ع) deserved to be drawn closer to the Almighty whenever he addressed Him silently [during the munajat][2]. Nobody contradicted the Imamites with regard to such rubbing, be it on the forehead or on the cheeks. Sunnis never bound themselves to rub their foreheads on dust when they perform their prayers or when they perform sajdat al-shukr. This is so despite the fact that al-Nakhi, Malik, and Abu Haneefa have all disliked to perform sajdat al-shukr, although the Hanbalis observe it[3], and so do the Shafi'is[4] whenever they receive a divine blessing or whenever a sign of Allah's wrath is removed from them.

IN MEDINA

Al-Sajjad (ع) had no choice except to leave Kerbala' and set forth to Medina (which used to be called Yathrib during the pre-Islamic era) after having stayed there for three days. It was too much for him to see how his aunts and the other women, as well as the children, were all crying day and night while visiting one grave after another. Bashir ibn Hathlam has said, "When we came close to Medina, Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) alighted and tied his she-camel then set up a tent where he lodged the women. He said to me, O Bashir! May Allah have mercy on your father! He was a poet. Can you compose any of it at all?' I said, Yes, O son of the Messenger of Allah! I, too, am a poet.' He (ع) said, Then enter Medina and mourn the martyrdom of Abu Abdullah (ع).' So I rode my horse and entered Medina. When I came near the Mosque of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, I cried loudly and recited these verses:

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1 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi ala Hamish Mir'at al-Uqool*, Vol. 3, p. 129. Al-Saduq, *Al-Faqih*, p. 69. Shaikh at-Tusi, *Al-Tahthib*, Vol. 1, p. 266, in a chapter dealing with what ought to be recited following the prayers.

2 Shaikh al-Saduq, *Al-Faqih*, p. 69.

3 Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, Vol. 1, p. 626. Ibn Muflih, *Al-Furoo'*, Vol. 1, p. 382.

4 *Kitab al-Umm*, Vol. 1, p. 116. Al-Mazni, *Al-Mukhtasar*, Vol. 1, p. 90. Al-Ghazali, *Al-Wajeeza*, Vol. 1, p. 32.

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O people of Yathrib! May you never stay therein!
Al-Husain (□) is killed, so my tears now rain,
His body is in Kerbala' covered with blood
While his head is on a spear displayed.

"Then I said, Here is Ali ibn al-Husain (ع) accompanied by his aunts and sisters; they have all returned to you. I am his messenger to you to inform you of his place.' People went out in a hurry, including women who had never before left their chambers, all weeping and wailing. All those in Medana were in tears. Nobody had ever seen such crying and wailing. They surrounded Ali, Zain al-Abidin (ع), to offer him their condolences. He came out of the tent with a handkerchief in his hand with which he was wiping his tears. Behind him was one of his slaves carrying a chair in which the Imam (ع) later sat, being overcome by grief. The cries of the mourners were loud. Everyone was weeping and wailing. Ali signaled to people to calm down. Once they stopped crying, he, peace be with him said,

All Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the King of the Day of Judgment, Creator of all creation Who is Exalted in the high heavens, Who is so near, He hears even the silent speech. We praise Him on the grave events, on time's tragedies, on the pain inflicted by such tragedies, on the crushing of calamities, on the greatness of our catastrophe, on our great, monstrous, magnanimous and afflicting hardships. O people! Allah, the most Exalted One, Praise to Him, has tried us with great trials and tribulations, with a tremendous loss suffered by the religion of Islam. The father of Abdullah, al-Husain (ع) and his family have been killed, and his women and children taken captive. They displayed his head in every land from the top of a spear... Such is the catastrophe similar to which there is none at all. O people! Which men among you are happy after him, or which heart is not grieved on his account? Which eye among you withholds its tears and is too miser with its tears? The seven great heavens wept over his

killing; the seas wept with their waves, and so did the heavens with their corners and the earth with its expanse; so did the trees with their branches and the fish in the depths of the seas. So did the angels who are close to their Lord. So did all those in the heavens. O people! Which heart is not grieved by his killing? Which heart does not yearn for him? Which hearing hears such a calamity that has befallen Islam without becoming deaf? O people! We have become homelsss, exiles, outcasts, shunned, distanced from all countries as though we were the offspring of the Turks or of Kabul without having committed a crime, nor an abomination, nor afflicted a calamity on Islam! Never did we ever hear such thing from our fathers of old. This is something new. By Allah! Had the Prophet (ص) required them to fight us just as he had required them to be good to us, they would not have done to us any more than what they already have. So we belong to Allah, and to Him is our return from this calamity, and what a great, painful, hard, cruel, and catastrophic calamity it is! To Allah do we complain from what has happened to us, from the suffering we have endured, for He is the Omnipotent, the Vengeful.

“Sasaah ibn Sawhan al-Abdi, an invalid who could barely walk on his feet, stood up and apologized to the Imam (ع) for not rushing to help his family due to his handicap. He, peace be with him, responded to him by accepting his excuse, telling him that he thought well of him, thanked him and sought Allah’s mercy for his father. Then Zain al-Abidin (ع) entered Medina accompanied by his family and children.[1]

Ibrahim ibn Talhah ibn Ubaydullah came to the Imam (ع) and asked him, "Who won?" The Imam, peace be with him, answered, "When the time for prayers comes, and when the athan and iqama are called, you will know who the winner is."[2]
Zainab took both knobs of the mosque’s door and cried out, "O grandfather! I mourn to you my brother al-Husain (ع)!"

Sukayna cried out, "O grandfather! To you do I complain from what we have been through, for by Allah, I never saw anyone more hard-hearted than Yazid, nor have I ever seen anyone, be he an apostate or a polytheist, more evil than him, more rough, or more cruel. He kept hitting my father’s lips with his iron bar as he said, How did you find the battle, O al-Husain (ع)?!’"[3]

The ladies who were born and grew up in the lap of Prophethood held a mourning ceremony for the Master of Martyrs (ع). They put on the most coarse of clothes; they shrouded themselves in black, and they kept weeping and wailing day and night as Imam as-Sajjad was cooking for them[4].

Once Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) said, "No lady who descended from Hashim used any dye, nor any oil, nor any kohl, for full five years; it

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1 Ibn Tawoos, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 116.

2 Shaikh at-Tusi, *Al-Aamali*, p. 66.

3 al-Qazwini, *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 163.

4 al-Barqi, *Mahasin*, Vol. 2, p. 420, in a chapter dealing with providing food for a mourning ceremony.

was then that al-Mukhtar sent them the head of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad."[1]

As regarding al-Rubab, she wept over [her husband] Abu Abdullah (ع) till her eyes were no longer capable of producing any more tears. One of her bondmaids told her that using a particular type of herb was tear stimulant, so she ordered it to be prepared for her in order to induce her tears[2].

Ali Zain al-Abidin (ع), the only surviving son of Imam al-Husain (ع), stayed aloof from the public in order to avoid being involved in their disputes with one another and in order to dedicate his entire time to worshipping Allah and mourning his father. He kept weeping day and night. One of his slaves said to him, "I fear for you lest you should perish." He (ع) said to him, "I only convey my complaints and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah what you all do not know. Jacob was a prophet from whom Allah caused one of his sons to be separated. He had twelve sons, and he knew that his son (Joseph) was still alive, yet he wept over him till he lost his eye sight. If you look at my father, my brothers, my uncles, and my friends, how they were slain all around me, tell me how can my grief ever end? Whenever I remember how Fatima's children were slaughtered, I cannot help crying. And whenever I look at my aunts and sisters, I remember how they were fleeing from one tent to another..."

To you, O Messenger of Allah (ع), is our complaint from the way whereby your nation treated your pure offspring, from the oppression and persecution to which they were subjected, and all Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

PART III

THE REVOLUTION'S OUTCOME

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1 *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, Vol. 2, p. 215, chapter 94.

2 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, p. 235, citing *Al-Kafi* of Shaikh al-Mufid.

What place does Imam al-Husain's revolution occupy in Islamic history? Those who are not familiar with its motives "innocently" or ignorantly inquire about its results, outcomes, fruits, achievements, etc. Others have even questioned its wisdom, arguing that to challenge a mighty force like that of the Umayyads of the time was fatal, suicidal, futile.

The revolution's motives have already been discussed; therefore, a brief review of the changes brought about in its aftermath throughout the Muslim world is appropriate at this stage.

Murdering Imam al-Husain (ع), grandson of the Messenger of Allah (ع), produced great shock waves throughout the Islamic world due to its horrible nature, to the unprecedented cruelty with which he and his family members and companions were treated, to the fact that he and his family were forbidden from having access to water while dogs and pigs were drinking of it, to the fact that he and his family were recognized as the most prestigious people on the face of earth, securing the highest esteem and regard of the Muslims who still remembered some of the statements made by their Prophet (ص) in honour of al-Hasan and al-Husain (ع) in particular and of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) in general. Muslims, as a result, loathed to associate themselves with his murderers or with anyone who had a hand in that massacre, in effect performing an act of civil disobedience of their rulers. Many of them openly cursed his murderers, for who can call himself a Muslim and who does not curse the murderer of his Prophet's family? Thus, the revolution achieved the task of unveiling the Umayyad's un-Islamic character to the general public, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind about what kind of barbarians those Umayyads were.

The concepts which the Umayyads were promoting were now being questioned by everyone; they were for the first time being recognized for what they really were: a distortion of everything Islam stands for. This isolated the Umayyads and changed the public's attitude towards them and towards anything they said or did.

Imam al-Husain's revolution set a living example as to what every Muslim should do in such situations. It had deeply penetrated people's hearts, producing a great pain and feeling of guilt at thus abandoning al-Husain (ع) and leaving him to be slaughtered at the hands of Allah's worst creatures without assisting him. Such feeling of shame grew greater and greater, transforming itself into sincere repentance and translating into open and massive popular revolutions against the Umayyads' regime of terror and, in the end, succeeding in putting an end to Yazid's authority and to that of his likes. Thus, al-Husain's revolution prompted the public to shake the dust of neo-jahiliyya brought about by the Umayyads and to stir, in a dynamic movement, to action to demolish all its edifices and altars.

Now let us review some of these massive popular uprisings. Among the references the reader can review for more information are: at-Tabari's *Tarikh*, al-Mas'udi's *Muraj al-Thahab*, and Ibn Katheer's *Tarikh*.

The first of those revolutions took place in Mecca after the news of the barbaric way wherein Imam al-Husain (ع) and his small band of supporters were butchered had reached the Meccans who started discussing them. It was led by Abdullah bin az-Zubair and is known in history books as the Harra incident which, according to p. 374, Vol. 4, of the Arabic text of at-Tabari's Tarikh (the issue consulted by the writer is dated 1409 A.H./1989 A.D. and is published by al-A'lami Establishment for Publications, P.O. Box 7120, Beirut, Lebanon), broke out on a Wednesday, Thul-Hijja 28, 63 A.H./August 31, 683 A.D.

THE HARRA INCIDENT

This incident started on a Wednesday, Thul-Hijja 28, 63 A.H./August 31, 683 A.D. and was led by Abdullah ibn az-Zubair. Let us stop here to introduce the reader to this man although he is too well known to any average student of Islamic history.

His full name is Abdullah ibn az-Zubair ibn al-Awwam. His mother was Asma', the oldest daughter of caliph Abu Bakr and sister of Aisha, the youngest wife of Prophet Muhammed (ص). He was born in 1 A.H. and died in 73 A.H. (622 - 692 A.D.) and participated in the Muslim

invasions of Persia, Egypt and North Africa and sided with his maternal aunt Aisha during the Battle of the Camel against Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع). He lived most of his life in Medina and rebelled against the government of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and against Umayyad rulers of Hijaz, declaring himself caliph. He extended his influence to Iraq after the Battle of Marj Rahit till al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi[1] succeeded in putting an end to his reign, executing him in the most ruthless way by nailing him to the Ka'ba..

Abdullah ibn az-Zubair delivered a sermon once wherein he strongly condemned those responsible for killing Imam al-Husain (ع), his family and friends, describing Yazid as a shameless drunkard, a man who preferred to listen to songs rather than to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, who preferred wine drinking over fasting and the company of his hunting party to any majlis where the Qur'an is explained. Amr ibn Sa'd ibn al-as was then governor of Mecca, and he was quite ruthless in dealing with Abdullah ibn az-Zubair, keeping him under constant surveillance, sending spies to his meeting places and constantly harassing him. When Yazid heard about Ibn az-Zubair's denunciations,

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1 al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi's cruelty and disrespect for Islamic tenets are matched only by those demonstrated by Yazid. His date of birth is unknown, but he died in 95 A.H./762 A.D. He was born at Ta'if, not far from Mecca, and was famous for his loyalty to the Umayyads. Marwan ibn al-Hakam, with whom the reader is already familiar, placed him in command of an army he raised to subject Hijaz to the Umayyads' control, rewarding him for his success by appointing him as governor of Mecca and Medina to which he later added Ta'if and Iraq. He founded the city of Wasit (located in Iraq midway between Basra and Kufa), where he died, and expanded the territory under the Umayyads' control. He also crushed the Kharijites. He was proverbial in his ruthlessness and love for shedding blood. His passion for shedding blood can be understood from the way he was born. Having just been born, he refused to take his mother's breast. It is said that Satan appeared in human form and said that the newborn had to be given the blood of animals to drink and to be fed with insects for four days. His cruelty towards those whom he jailed was unheard of. His prisoners were fed with bread mixed with ashes. At the time of his death, may he be placed in the deepest depths of hell, he and his Umayyad mentors and their supporters, his prisoners numbered 33,000 men and women, 16,000 of whom were completely naked and left to sleep without any blanket or sheet covering whatsoever.

he pledged to have him chained, so he dispatched some of his men with a silver chain, ordering them to tie Ibn az-Zubair with it. His deputies passed by Medina on their way to Mecca and met with Marwan ibn al-Hakam who joined them in their effort to arrest Ibn az-Zubair, but the party failed in carrying out its mission, and more and more people pledged to assist Ibn az-Zubair against Yazid.

Having come to know of such failure, Yazid called to his presence ten men from among the most prominent supporters of his bloody regime, and there are always those who support bloody regimes in every time and clime. He ordered these ten men to meet with Ibn az-Zubair to dissuade him from rebelling. But they, too, failed in their attempt due to the public support Ibn az-Zubair was enjoying. Yazid now resorted to deposing Mecca's governor Amr ibn Sa'd and appointing al-Walid ibn Utbah in his place, prompting Ibn az-Zubair to write Yazid to describe his newly appointed governor as an idiot who never listened to advice nor enjoyed any wisdom. Yazid deposed al-Walid ibn Utbah and replaced him with Uthman ibn Muhammed ibn Abu Sufyan, a young man who knew absolutely nothing about politics or diplomacy.

The first action the new governor undertook was dispatching a fact finding committee to Damascus to ascertain all the rumours about Yazid being a corrupt bastard, a man unfit to rule. Among the members of the mission were: Abdullah ibn Hanzalah al-Ansari[1], Abdullah ibn Abu Amr al-Makhzami, al-Munthir ibn az-Zubair, and a good number of the most prominent men of Hijaz. Yazid received them with open arms and showered them with money and presents, but when they returned, they cursed Yazid for his blasphemy and un-Islamic conduct and encouraged people to revolt against him, using the money they had received from him to finance the rebellion against him. While passing by Medina, the residents heard the report of the members of this committee. They, therefore, deposed their governor, Uthman ibn Muhammed, and elected Abdullah ibn Hanzalah as their new governor. When the Umayyads saw how the public turned against them, they

1 Abdullah ibn Hanzalah belonged to the Ansar of the Aws tribe, and he was one of the most famous of the *tabieen*, a man of legendary courage and fortitude. When the people of Medina rebelled against Yazid, they chose him as their governor. He was killed during the Harra incident.

sought refuge at the house of Marwan ibn al-Hakam, cousin of Uthman ibn Affan, where they were besieged. The siege was not lifted till those Umayyads solemnly swore not to take any measure against those who laid the siege against them and not to help Yazid in any way, a pledge which they did not keep, for Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah and Yazid were their mentors, and these men never honoured a pledge.

When the rebellion reached such a point, Yazid realized that he had lost control over the people of Hijaz, and that only an army sent against them from Damascus would do the job. He, therefore, appointed a ruffian named Muslim ibn Uqbah al-Murri who was, at the time, quite advanced in age, to undertake such a task. Despite his age, Muslim agreed to shoulder the responsibility of quelling the rebellion. An army, hence, of twenty thousand strong set out from Damascus to quell the rebellion in Hijaz with clear orders from Yazid to "... invite the people to renounce their rebellion and to renew their pledge of loyalty [to Yazid]. Give them three days to consider doing so. If they persist in their defiance, let the soldiers have a free hand in the city for three days: Any money or weapons or food they lay their hands on is theirs. Once the three days are over, leave the people alone, and spare Ali son of al-Husain (ع), and admonish everyone to be good to him and show respect to him, for he did not join the rebellion," as at-Tabari tells us.

Yazid’s troops first attacked Medina then Mecca. In Medina, according to al-Mas'udi and al-Daynari, they demolished homes, raped women, girls and even children, plundered anything and everything they found in their way, committing untold atrocities justified only by those who follow Yazid and who do not curse or condemn him, hence they shall receive their share of the Almighty’s condemnation on the Day of Judgment and shall be lodged in hell in the company of Yazid and his likes. In his renown Tarikh, Ibn Katheer tells us that as many as seven hundred men who knew the text of the Holy Qur’an by heart, including three close sahabis of the Prophet (ص), were killed in that incident which is referred to in the books of history as the Incident of the Harra, a reference to "Harrat Waqim" where Yazid’s army first attacked. This place is named after a man belonging to the Amaliqa (“the giants”) and is one of two Medina suburbs bearing the same name: the eastern Harra, this same “Harrat Waqim,” located on the eastern side of

Medina, and the western Harra, as we are told by Imam Shihabud-Deen Abu Abdullah Yaqat ibn Abdullah al-Hamawi al-Rami al-Baghdadi, famous as Yaqat al-Hamawi, who describes several places each one of which is called "Harra," then he details Harrat Waqim and comments saying the following on pp. 287-288, Vol. 2, of his voluminous work *Mu'jam al-Buldan*:

It was at this Harra that the famous "Harra Incident" took place during the lifetime of Yazid son of Mu'awiyah in the year 63 A.H./683 A.D. The commander of the army, who had been appointed by Yazid, was Muslim ibn Uqbah al-Murri who, on account of his ugly action, was called "al-musrif" (the one who went to extremes in committing evil). He [Muslim] came to Harrat Waqim and the people of Medina went out to fight him. He vanquished them, killing three thousand and five hundred men from among the mawali, one thousand and four hundred from among the Ansar, but some say one thousand and seven hundred, and one thousand and three hundred men from among Quraish. His hosts entered Medina. They confiscated wealth, arrested some people and raped women. Eight hundred women became pregnant and gave birth, and the offspring were called "the offspring of the Harra." Then he brought prominent personalities to swear the oath of allegiance to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and to declare that they were slaves of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. Anyone who refused was killed.

The people of Medina had re-dug the moat (khandaq) which had been dug during the Battle of the Moat, preparations for which started at the beginning of the month of Shawwal, 5 A.H. (the end of February, 627 A.D.), according to the orders of the Prophet (ص) and in response to a suggestion presented to him by the great *sahabi* Salman al-Farisi as they stood to defend themseles against a huge army raised by Abu Sufyan to fight them. They also tried to fortify their city with a bulwark.

Yazid's army succeeded in putting an end to the rebellion at a very high cost, but Abdullah ibn az-Zubair survived unscathed. A number of the sahaba and tabieen were branded like animals as an additional insult.
What happened in Mecca?

Having finished with the people of Medina, Muslim, the aging commander of Yazid's hand-picked troops, marched to Mecca. On the way, he camped at a place called al-Mushallal. There, he felt that death was approaching him, so he called to his presence al-Haseen ibn Nameer al-Sukuni and said to him, "O son of the donkey's saddle! By Allah, had I not felt that death was approaching me, I would never have given you command of this army. But the commander of the faithful (meaning Yazid) had put you second in command, and none can override his orders. Listen, therefore, carefully to my will, and do not listen to any man from Quraish at all. Do not stop the Syrians from slaughtering their foes, and do not stay for more than three days before putting an end to the reprobate Ibn az-Zubair." This is sated by at-Tabari on p. 381, Vol. 4, of the Arabic text of his famous voluminous Tarikh where he provides details of this incident. Muslim died and was buried there. Once the Syrian army left al-Mushallal, people dug up his grave, took his corpse out and hanged it on a palm tree. When the army came to know about this incident, a detachment was sent to investigate and to kill those suspected of hanging the corpse which was buried again and soldiers were assigned to guard it at all times. These details and many more are stated on p. 251, Vol. 2, of al-Ya'qubi's *Tarikh*.

Catapults were installed around Mecca and in the vicinity of the Ka'ba, the holiest of holies in Islam. Fire balls were hurled and the Ka'ba was soon in flames... Its walls collapsed and were burnt, and its ceiling crumbled... According to pp. 71-72, Vol. 3, of al-Mas'udi's voluminous book *Muraj al-Thahab*, a thunderbolt hit the Syrian army on a Saturday, Rab'i I 27, 61 A.H./December 28, 680 A.D., only eleven days before Yazid's death, burning eleven of the attackers. Pleas to spare the Ka'ba went unheeded, and the fighting went beyond the three days' deadline put by Muslim. The fighting took place during the last days of the month of Muharram and continued through the entire month of Safar. When the news that Yazid had died reached Mecca, Ibn az-Zubair addressed the Syrians thus: "Your tyrant has just died; so, whoever among you wishes to join the people (in their rebellion) may do so or he may return to Syria." But the Syrians attacked him. The people of Mecca saw the extent of savagery of the Syrian army, so they collectively shielded Ibn az-Zubair and forced the army to retreat and to confine itself to its camp. Slowly the Syrians slipped out of their camp

and joined the Umayyads in Mecca who sheltered them and transported them back to Syria in small groups, as we are told by at-Tabari who details these events on pp. 16-17, Vol. 7, of his *Tarikh*.

Abdullah ibn az-Zubair declared himself as caliph and appointed a new governor for Mecca, and the people of Hijaz enjoyed a measure of self-rule till the year 72 A.H./692 A.D. when al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi was ordered by the Umayyad "caliph" then, namely Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan, to bring the people of Hijaz back under his rule. It was in the month of Thul-Qida 72 A.H./March 692 A.D. that Mecca was attacked again (some of the war equipment used then included five catapults, predecessors of today's field artillery) and burnt again and its governor was deposed. A new governor loyal to the Umayyads was installed in his place, and he was a Syrian named Thulabah who demonstrated utmost disregard and disrespect toward the Islamic tenets and toward the people of Hijaz while still claiming to be a Muslim!

Detailing the events of the year 73 A.H./692-93, at-Tabari, on p. 202, Vol. 7, of his *Tarikh*, narrates saying that when the Ka'ba was burnt, a dark cloud came from the direction of Jiddah roaring with lightning and thunder. It stood above the Ka'ba and poured its water on it and put the fire out. Then it went to the Abu Qubays mountain area where its lightning damaged one of the five catapults, killing four of the soldiers tending to it. Another lightning hit, killing forty other men. This incident is narrated by several other historians besides at-Tabari. It was not long before al-Hajjaj was able to arrest and behead Ibn az-Zubair whose severed head he sent to Damascus together with those of Abdullah ibn Safwan, Imarah ibn Amr ibn Hazm and others. Those who carried the heads and displayed them on the way in Medina were generously rewarded by Marwan ibn Abdul-Malik.

Not everyone supported the revolt led by Abdullah ibn az-Zubair. The famous *sahabi* and cousin of the Prophet (ص), Ibn Abbas, that is, Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib, was among those who did not support Ibn az-Zubair, considering him as an opportunist. When Imam Husain (ع) was in Mecca immediately after his departure from Medina, and when the Meccans expressed their support for him, Abdullah ibn az-Zubair isolated himself and did not show any support for the Imam (

ع), considering him as a competitor for his own bid to power. When the Imam (ع) left Mecca, Abdullah ibn az-Zubair felt relieved. Ibn Abbas composed poetry depicting such an attitude of Abdullah ibn az-Zubair. The reader is already acquainted with Ibn Abbas in a footnote above. Since Aisha could not get Ibn az-Zubair, son of her sister Asma' daughter of caliph Abu Bakr, to become the caliph following the murder of her cousin, caliph Uthman ibn Affan, Ibn az-Zubair now tried on his own to acquire the caliphate for himself, and he met with success though for a short while.

Having come to know that Abdullah ibn Abbas refused to swear the oath of allegiance to Ibn az-Zubair, Yazid wrote him saying,

It has come to my knowledge that the atheist son of az-Zubair invited you to swear the oath of allegiance to him and to be obedient to him so that you might support him in his wrongdoing and share in his sins, and that you refused and kept your distance from him because Allah made you aware of our rights, we family members of the Prophet; so, may He grant you the rewards due to those who maintain their ties of kinship, those who are true to their promise. No matter what I forget, I shall never forget how you always remained in contact with us, and how good the reward you have received, the one due to those who obey and who are honoured by being relatives of the Messenger of Allah. Look, then, after your people, and look at those whom the son of az-Zubair enchants with his words and promises and pull them away from him, for they will listen to you more than they will to him; they would hear you more than they would hear that renegade atheist, and peace be with you.

Ibn Abbas wrote Yazid back saying,

"I received your letter wherein you mentioned Ibn az-Zubair's invitation to me to swear the oath of allegiance to him, and that I refused due to recognizing your right. If that is the case [as you claim], I desire nothing but being kind to you. But Allah knows best what I intend to do. And you wrote me urging me to encourage people to rally behind you and to discourage them from supporting Ibn az-Zubair... Nay! Neither pleasure nor happiness is here for you; may your mouth

be filled with stones, for you are the one whose view is weak when you listened to your own whims and desires, and it is you who is at fault and who shall perish! And you wrote me urging me to hurry and to join my ties of kinship. Withhold your own, man, for I shall withhold from you my affection and my support. By my life, you do not give us of what is in your hand except very little while withholding a lot; may your father lose you! Do you think that I will really forget how you killed al-Husain (ع) and the youths of Banu Abdul-Muttalib, the lanterns that shone in the dark, the stars of guidance, the lamp-posts of piety, and how your horses trampled upon their bodies according to your command, so they were left unburied, drenched in their blood on the desert without any shrouds, nor were they buried, with the wind blowing on them and the wolves invading them, and the heinas assaulting them till Allah sent them people who do not have shirk running through their veins and who shrouded and buried them...? From me and from them come supplications to Allah to torment you! No matter what I forget, I shall never forget how you let loose on them the daiyy and the son of the daiyy, the one begotten by that promiscuous whore, the one whose lineage is distant, whose father and mother are mean, the one because of whose adoption did your father earn shame, sin, humiliation and abasement in the life of this world and in the hereafter. This is so because the Messenger of Allah (ع) said, "The son is begotten by wedlock, whereas for the prostitute there are stones." Your father claims that the son is out of wedlock, and it does not harm the prostitute, and he accepts him as his son just as he does his legitimate offspring! Your father killed the Sunnah with ignorance while deliberately bringing to life all misguidance. And no matter what I forget, I shall never forget how you chased al-Husain (ع) out of the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allah [Medana] to that of Allah Almighty [Mecca], and how you dispatched men to kill him there. You kept trying till you caused him to leave Mecca and to go to Kufa pursued by your horsemen, with your soldiers roaring at him like lions, O enemy of Allah, of His Messenger (ع), and of his Ahl al-Bayt (ع)! Then you wrote Marjana’s son ordering him to face al-Husain (ع) with his cavalry and infantry, with spears and swords. And you wrote him ordering him to be swift in attacking him and not to give him time to negotiate any settlement till you killed him and the youths of Banu Abdul-Muttalib who belong to Ahl al-Bayt (ع) with him, those from

whom Allah removed all abomination and whom He purified with a perfect purification. Such are we, unlike your own uncouth fathers, the livers of donkeys! You knew fully well that he was most prominent in the past and most cherished in the present, had he only sought refuge in Mecca and permitted bloodshed in its sanctuary. But he sought reconciliation, and he asked you to go back to your senses, yet you went after the few who were in his company and desired to eradicate his Ahl al-Bayt (ع) as if you were killing dynasties from Turkey or from Kabul! How do you conceive me as being friendly to you, and how dare you ask me to support you?! You have killed my own brothers, and your sword is dripping with my blood, and you are the one whom I seek for revenge. So if Allah wills, you shall not be able to shed my blood, nor shall you be faster than me in seeking revenge so you would be more swift in killing us just as the prophets are killed, considering their blood equal to that of others. But the promise is with Allah, and Allah suffices in supporting the wronged, and He seeks revenge for the oppressed. What is truly amazing is your own transporting the daughters of Abdul-Muttalib and their children to Syria. You see yourself as our vanquisher, and that you have the right to humiliate us, although through me and through them did Allah bestow blessings upon you and upon your slave parents. By Allah! You welcome the evening and the day in security indifferent to my wounds; so, let my own tongue wound you instead, and let my tying and untying not provoke you to argue. Allah shall not give you a respite following your killing of the Progeny of the Messenger of Allah (ع) except for a very short while before He takes you like a Mighty One, and He shall not take you out of the life of this world except as an abased and dejected sinner; so, enjoy your days, may you lose your father, as you please, for what you have committed has surely made you abased in the sight of Allah."[1]

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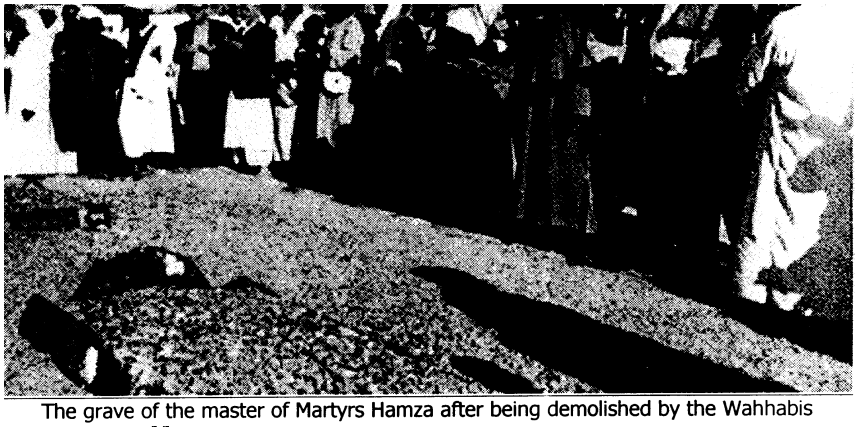
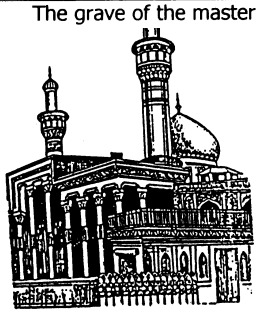
1 This text is compiled from the contents of p. 250, Vol. 7, of *Mujma al-Zawa'id* of Abu Bakr al-Haythami, p. 18, Vol. 4 (first edition), of al-Balathiri's book *Ansab al-Ashraf*, p. 77, Vol. 2, of al-Khawarizmi's great book *Maqtal al-Husain (□)*, p. 50, Vol. 4, and of Ibn Katheer's book *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, where the events of the year 64 A.H./684 A.D. are detailed, an account which agrees with what is recorded in al-Mas'udi's book *Muraj al-Thahab*.

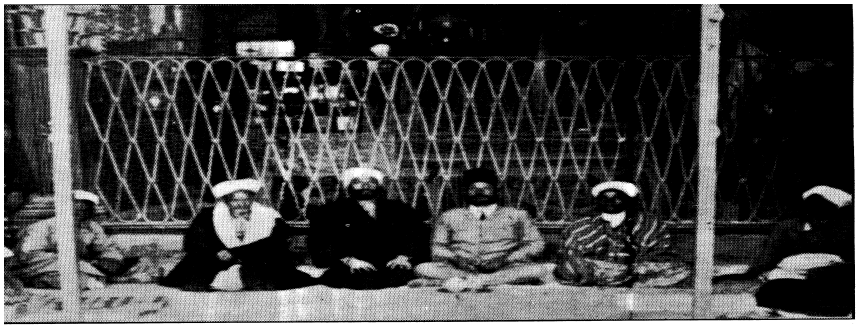


The grave of the master of Martyrs Hamza after being demolished by the Wahhabis



Ibn Abbas never swore the oath of allegiance to the tyrant Yazid till his death.

Following the revolt of Abdullah ibn az-Zubair, other revolts erupted throughout the Islamic lands. One of them was the Revolt of the Tawwabeen (the penitents) which broke out in Kufa in 65 A.H./684-85 A.D., then the revolt in 66 A.H./686 A.D. which was led by al-Mukhtar who killed all those who had participated in killing al-Husain (ع). The Alawites (Alawids) followed with revolts of their own, including that of the great martyr Zaid ibn Ali and his son Yahya and finally the revolt of the Abbasides who put an end to the Umayyads' rule for good.



The grave of the master of Martyrs Hamza before being demolished by the Wahhabis

HUSAIN'S GRAVE:
A MAGNIFICENT SHRINE

Anyone who is lucky enough to visit Imam Husain's grave-site stands awe-stricken at the beauty of the magnificent shrine housing his tomb, a shrine which has been renovated time and over again all these centuries. It truly is a masterpiece of architecture, a jewel of art, and a pleasure to the eyes of the beholder. It also houses a

grand center for theological studies. Yet many tyrants and fanatics tried to obliterate it and reduce it to rubble, while the Almighty has always been protecting it and getting it rebuilt and renovated. This is made partially possible through the generous donations of those who love the Imam (ع) and who seek nearness to Allah by visiting the grave-site of one of His true servants, a man of honourable descent who sacrificed his life and family and everything he had for the sake of reawakening the Islamic world and getting it to refine Islam from the distortion introduced into it by the Umayyad tyrants and miscreants. Let us, therefore, stop here for a minute to review the history of the attempts aiming at obliterating Imam Husain's grave and identify them, call them and shame them, condemn them and condemn those who do not condemn them. What is truly amazing is that all those who attacked this shrine claim to be Muslims who follow the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ع)!

In 236 A.H./850-51 A.D., the Abbaside caliph al-Mutawakkil Billah aimed at demolishing the shrine and all its attachments by razing it to the ground and planting the area where it stands. He hoped to prohibit anyone from visiting it or visiting any places held by Shi'as as sacred, threatening their pilgrims with stiff penalties. During his reign, which lasted from 232 - 247 A.H. (847 - 861 A.D.), he issued such orders four times. The first time such an attempt was made is dated 232 A.H./846 A.D. He was outraged because one of his singing concubines had gone to perform the pilgrimage to it during the month of Shaban of that year. The second attempt was four years later (in 236 A.H./850 A.D.). The third attempt took place in the next year, 237 A.H./850-51 A.D. The fourth attempt took place in 247 A.H./861 A.D., in the aftermath of which he himself was killed by his son, the later Abbaside caliph al-Muntasir, who was a pious and ascetic and sympathetic towards the family members (Ahl al-Bayt) of the Prophet (ص). All these attempts were carried out, according to al-Mutawakkil's orders, by a Jew named Ebrahim (Abram) who was nicknamed Deezaj, the dumb donkey. Yet despite all these attempts, the shrine kept standing again and again due to the zeal of those who believed in the message for which Imam Husain (ع) sacrificed himself and all those who were dear and near to him.

Another demolition attempt was carried out by one Zabbah ibn Muhammed al-Asdi, a highway robber by profession, who, assisted by a number of bedouin tribesmen, committed his foul act in 369 A.H./979-80 A.D. for which he was chased and punished by the Buwayhid ruler Izzud-Dawlah who put the shrine of Imam Husain (ع) in Kerbala' and that of his father Imam Ali (ع) in Najaf under his protection. This incident took place during the reign of the Abbaside ruler al-Ta'i Lillah.

In 407 A.H./1016 A.D., during the reign of the Abbaside ruler al-Qadir Billah, a mid-night fire engulfed the shrine, damaging the dome and the corridors. Some historians believe that it was not an accident but a deliberate sabotage. The said Abbaside ruler was siding with one Muslim sect against another, sowing the seeds of discord among various Islamic sects.

The most serious damage to the shrine was inflicted by the Wahhabis, followers of Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab who invented an odd interpretation of Islam which does not respect the grave-sites of any holy person, including that of the Prophet of Islam (ع). Since the Wahhabis have proven to be the most antagonistic[1] towards the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (ع), it is not out of place here to introduce the reader to their man, Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab, while narrating the mischief he and his bedouin zealots committed against the shrine of Imam Husain (ع) in Kerbala' and that of his father, Imam Ali (ع), in Najaf.

Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab was born in 1115 A.H./1703 A.D. in the small town of Uyayna in Nejd, the southern highland of Arabia's interior, and died in 1206 A.H./1791-92 A.D. He belonged to the tribe of Tamim. His father was a lawyer and a pious Muslim adhering to the Hanbalite sect founded by

1 Such antagonism has proven to be bloody especially in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Wahabbis also justify the killing of other Sunnis who do not subscribe to their beliefs.

Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal who, with the most rigid consistency, had advocated the principle of the exclusive validity of the *hadith* as against the inclination among the older sects to make concessions to reason and commonsense, especially since Islam is the religion of commonsense. In Baghdad, Muhammed learned the jurisprudence of the Hanbali Sunni sect which remains to be predominant among the people of Nejd and Hijaz: Whabbis constitute no more than 8% of the entire population of today's Saudi Arabia, the only country in the world named after its ruling clan. The reader has already come to know how much distortion exists in *hadith* and can appreciate the danger of believing in each and every hadith as though it were the inviolable and irrefutable gospel truth. He also studied jurisprudence at Mecca and Medina where his mentors were admirers of Ibn Taymiyyah who, in the 7th Century A.H./the14th Century A.D., had revived the teachings of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal. The founder of the sect, the last in the series of the four Sunni sects, namely Ahmed ibn Hanbal, was a theologian born in and died in Baghdad; the year of his birth is 164 A.H./780 A.D. and that of his death is 241 A.H./855 A.D.

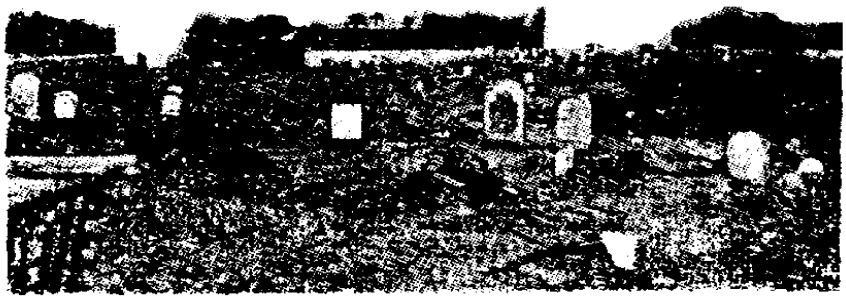
Since his childhood, Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab was influenced by the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah[2] and, therefore, looked askance at many religious practices of the people of Nejd. Such an influence convinced him that the dominant form of contemporary Islam, particularly among the Turks of his time, was permeated with abuses. He, therefore, sought

2 Ibn Taymiyyah is Ahmed ibn Abdul-Halim ibn Abdul-Salam ibn Abdullah al-Khidr, "Taqiyy ad-Din ," "Abul-Abbas," a Hanbali scholar who was born in Harran (ancient Carrhae where Mudar Arabs lived, a town built by Harran brother of prophet Abraham [a] from whom it derived its name), Iraq, in 661 A.H./1263 A.D. and died inside a Damascus, Syria, prison in 728 A.H./1328 A.D. He had his own radical and un-orthodox way of interpreting *hadith* which was different from everyone else's, distinguishing him from all other scholars of jurisprudence. Those who adopt his views are called "Salafis," followers of the "salaf," the "pious" predecessors. He is on the record as the first person to disbelieve in intercession (*shafaa*). For more details, refer to the 463-page book titled *Ibn Taymiyyah* by Sa'ib Abdul-Hamid, published in Arabic in Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran, by the Ghadir Center for Islamic Studies. There are many fanatical groups in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan that adopt this "Salafi" ideology disseminated by government-sponsored Saudi missionary activities and funded by petro-dollars.

to restore the original purity of the doctrine and of life in its restricted milieux. The facts that the Wahhabis are the minority of all Muslim minorities, and that the people of Nejd and Hijaz are still predominantly Hanbalites who do not subscribe to Wahhabism by choice, prove that he did not achieve his objective and, most likely, such an objective will never be achieved despite all Saudi Arabia's petro-dollars and the abundance of those who solicit such dollars, the ruler-appointed preachers.

Having joined his father, with whom he debated his personal views, Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab caused a seriously violent confrontation to erupt from such an exchange of opposite views, for his father's views were consistent with mainstream Hanbali Muslim thought. He performed the pilgrimage for the first time, visiting Mecca and Medina where he attended lectures on different branches of Islamic learning. His mentors included Abdullah ibn Ibrahim ibn Saif and Hayat al-Sindi, who both were admirers of Ibn Taymiyyah. They both rejected the principle of *taqlid* (imitation) which is commonly accepted by all four Sunni schools of jurisprudence as well as by Shi'a Muslims. These men's teachings had a great impact on Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab who began to take a more aggressive attitude in preaching his views and, hence, he publicly expressed his denunciation of the sanctification of the holy precincts of the Prophet's shrine and of the shrines of any "saint." Then he went back home and decided to go to Basra, Iraq, on his way to Damascus, Syria. During his stay in Basra, he expressed the same views, whereupon its people kicked him out of the city. He almost died of thirst once, due to exhaustion and to the intensity of the heat in the desert, when he was on his way from Basra to the city of Zubair but was saved by a Zubairi man. Finding his provisions insufficient to travel to Damascus, Muhammed had to change his travel plan and to go to the (Saudi) al-Ahsa (or al-Hasa) province then to Huraymala, one of the cities of Nejd, to which his father and the entire family had to move because of the public's denunciation of young Muhammed's views, reaching it in 1139 A.H./1726-27 A.D. By then, Muhammed's good and pious father had lost his job as *qadi* (judge) on account of his son's radical preaching. The denunciation continued till his father's death in 1153 A.H./1740 A.D.

His father's death emboldened him to express his thoughts more freely and consolidate his movement. His preaching found an echo among some of the people of his town, and his fame started on the rise, so much so that he was welcomed by the ruler of his home town Uyayna, namely Uthman ibn Muammar Al Hamad, who offered him protection and appointed him as his personal assistant. In order to cement his ties with Uthman, Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab married Jawhara, Uthman's aunt. Uthman ordered his townsmen to observe the Wahhabi teachings, and Muhammed now felt strong enough to demolish the monument erected on the burial site of Zaid ibn al-Khattab. But the new alliance between Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab and Uthman ibn Muammar Al Hamad disturbed the scholars of Nejd who complained against the first to the emir (provincial governor) of the al-Ahsa province. The emir wrote Uthman reprimanding and warning him of dire consequences for encouraging Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab to revolt against the established authority and creed. Finding himself in a precarious situation and his job in jeopardy, Uthman dismissed Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab from his service and asked him to leave the town.



منظر البقيع من الجهة الشرقية الجنوبية سنة ١٣٢١ هـ

In 1160 A.H./1746-47 A.D., having been expelled from Uyayna, Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab sought refuge in Dar'iyya, only six hours away from Uyayna, at the invitation of its ruler, Muhammed ibn Saud[1], ancestor of the Al Saud dynasty now ruling Saudi Arabia. Muhammed ibn Saud lived in a fortified settlement as chief of the Unayza clan. Soon, an alliance was forged between both men, each promising the other glory, fame, and riches for his support. The people of that town lived at the time in utter destitution, and something was needed to bring them relief. Muhammed ibn Saud rejected any veneration of the Prophet (ص) or of other men of piety. It was there that Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab stayed for more than two years. Both men felt that it was time to declare "jihad" against all those who rejected the new Wahhabi dogma, forming a small band of raiders mounted on horseback to invade various towns, kill and loot. The lives and property of all those who did not subscribe to the views of these two men were now in jeopardy for they were considered as guilty of being pagans fighting against whom is justified by the Qur'an until they converted or extirpated. These raids extended far beyond Dar'iyya to include all of Nejd and parts of Yemen, Hijaz, Syria and Iraq. In 1187 A.H./1773 A.D., the principality of Riyadh fell to them, marking a new era in the lucrative career of Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab.

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1 The correct pronunciation of "Saud" is Sa'ood," but we will stick to the commonly used spelling of this word.

During a short period of time, the destitutes of Dar'iyya found themselves wearing sumptuous clothes, carrying weapons decorated with gold and silver, eating meat, and baking wheat bread; in short, they found their dreams come true, going from rags to riches, thanks to those raids which continued till Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab died in 1206 A.H./1791-92 A.D., leaving his band to carry out more and more raids and his form of "Wahhabism" embraced by the Al Saud clansmen who eventually ascended to power, due to the support they received from the British who used them to undermine the last Islamic power, the Ottoman Sultanate. Al Saud became the sole rulers of Nejd and Hijaz, promoting and publicizing for Wahhabism by any and all means, spending in the process funds which belong to the Muslim masses, not to them.

After the death of Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab, his band of raiders, under the leadership of the Al Saud dynasty, pursued their campaigns in the pretext of disseminating Wahhabism. In the years that followed Muhammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab's death, the Wahhabis gradually became burdensome to their neighbours. They pursued their northward advance; therefore, the Pasha of Baghdad found himself complelled to take defensive measures against them, having heard about their ruthlessness and disregard for the lives of all non-Wahhabis. He, therefore, led an army of about seven thousand Turks and twice did his army of mostly Arabs attacked them in their richest and most fertile oasis, that of al-Ahsa, in 1212 A.H./1797 A.D. but did not move on their capital, Dar'iyya, at once, as he should have, laying a siege for a month to the citadel of al-Ahsa. When Muhammed ibn Saud himself advanced against the Pasha, the latter did not dare to attack him but concluded a six-year peace treaty with him, a treaty for which the Wahhabis later demonstrated their disregard. By then, they had already set their eyes on plundering the shrine of Imam Husain (ع) and all the valuable relics it contained.

On the anniversary of the historic Ghadar Khumm incident, that is, Thul-Hijja 18, 1216 A.H./April 21, 1801 A.D.[1], Prince Saud mobilized

1 Other references consulted for this book indicate that the said attack was

an army of twenty thousand strong and invaded the holy city of Kerbala'. First they laid a siege of the city then entered the city and brutally massacred its defenders, visitors and inhabitants, looting, burning, demolishing and wreaking havoc ... The city [Kerbala'] fell into their hands. The magnificent domed building over the grave of Husain was destroyed and enormous booty dragged off.[1]

More than five thousand Muslims were slaughtered. Then the Saudi prince turned to the Kerbala' shrine itself; he and his men pulled gold slabs out of their places, stole chandeliers and Persian rugs and historical relics, plundering anything of value. This tragedy is immortalized by eulogies composed by poets from Kerbala' and elsewhere. And the Wahhabis did not leave Kerbala' alone after this massacre; rather, they continued for the next twelve years invading it, killing and looting, taking advantage of the administrative weakness of the aging Ottoman Sultanate responsible for protecting it. During those twelve years, more and more bedouin tribes joined them for a "piece of the action." In 1218 A.H./1803 A.D., during the time of hajj (pilgrimage), the Wahhabis, led by Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, attacked Mecca, which surrendered to them after putting up a brief resistance. They looted whatever possessions the pilgrims had had. The governor of Mecca, Sharif Ghalib, fled to Jiddah which was shortly thereafter besieged, and the leader of the Syrian pilgrim caravan, Abd-Allah Pasha of Damascus, had to leave Mecca, too. On Rajab 19, 1218 A.H./November 4, 1803, Abdul-Aziz Al Saud paid with his life for what he had committed; he was killed in Dar'iyya. His son, Saud ibn Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, lifted the siege of Jiddah and had Sharif Ghalib sent back to Mecca as his vassal in exchange for Jiddah's customs revenue.

In 1220 A.H./1805 and 1221 A.H./1806 A.D., Mecca and Medina fell to the Wahhabis[2] respectively. The Wahhabis unleashed their wrath on

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carried out on Thul-Hijja 14, 1215 A.H./April 28, 1801 A.D., but we are of the view that the above date is more accurate.

1 Carl Brockelmann, ed., *History of the Islamic Peoples* (London, 1980), p. 354.

2 *Ibid*.

both holy cities, committing untold atrocities and razing the cemetery, where many relatives and sahaba (companions) of the Prophet (ص) were buried, to the ground[1]. Having spread their control over Riyadh, Jiddah, Mecca and Medina, all of today's Saudi Arabia became practically under their control.

The next major invasion of the holy city of Kerbala' by the Wahhabis took place on the 9th of the holy month of Ramadan of 1225 A.H., corresponding to October 8, 1810 A.D. It was then that both Kerbala' and Najaf (where the magnificent shrine of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) is located) were besieged. Roads were blocked, pilgrims were looted then massacred, and the shrines were attacked and damaged. The details of this second invasion were recorded by an eyewitness: Sayyid Muhammed Jawad al-Amili, author of the famous book of jurisprudence titled *Miftah al-Karama* which was completed shortly after midnight on the very first day when the siege was laid. The writer recorded how terrified he and the other residents of Kerbala' felt at seeing their city receiving a major attack from the Wahhabis. A large number of pilgrims were killed. Their number varies from one account to another, and the most realistic figure seems to be the one provided by Sayyid Muhammed Jawad al-Amili who puts it at one hundred and fifty.

The Wahhabis no longer attack and demolish Imam Husain's shrine, but they have been relentlessly attacking the creed of those who venerate him through a flood of books written and printed world-wide. They fund their writing, publication and circulation. They sometimes distribute them free of charge during the annual pilgrimage season while prohibiting all pilgrims from carrying or distributing any

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1 The Wahhabis have carried out their campaigns against the burial grounds of the Prophet's family and companions well into the next century. For example, in 1343 A.H./1924 A.D., they demolished the grave-sites of many family members and companions (*sahaba*) of the Prophet (ص) against the wish and despite the denunciation of the adherents of all other Muslim sects world-wide. And in 1413 A.H./1993, they also demolished the house of Khadaja, wife of Prophet Muhammed (ع), as well as the house where the Prophet (ص) had been born, which stood approximately 50 meters northward from Khadaja's house, turning both of them into public bathrooms...

literature at all... During recent years, they have been beheading Shiite scholars wherever they can find them, destroying Shiite shrines, such as the famous 'Askari Shrine in Samarra, Iraq, which was bombed and destroyed in February of 2006 and in June of 2007; it houses the remains of both Imam Ali al-Hadi and Hassan al-'Askari, peace be with them, who descended from the immediate family of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of the Almighty be with him and his progeny. Many other Shiite mosques and Husainiyyas were bombed by the Wahhabis and are still targets of their mischief, yet these rogues will never be able to destroy Shiite Islam till the Resurrection Day. They have plenty of money, so they send their filthy money to Iraq to get the Muslims to kill each other, the Shiite to kill the Sunni and vice versa, thus making Satan the happiest being on earth, for nothing pleases this damned creature more than seeing Muslims at each other's throats. Such is the desire of all the enemies of Islam and Muslims. Actually, due to the barbarism of these fundamentalist Wahhabis, more and more Muslims are getting to be curious about Shiite Islam, so they study it and many of them end up eventually switching their sect from Sunni to Shiite Islam. There is no harm in a Sunni becoming Shiite or in a Shiite becoming Sunni: Islam is one tree stalk having two major branches. After all, religions of the world have sects, and people change the sect they follow according to their personal convictions and satisfaction. It happens every day, and nobody fusses about it. Thus, the Wahhabis' mischief is actually having the opposite result of what these fundamentalist fanatics, who have ruined the reputation of Islam and Muslims world-wide, anticipate.

PERFORMING ZIYARAT TO HUSAIN'S SHRINE

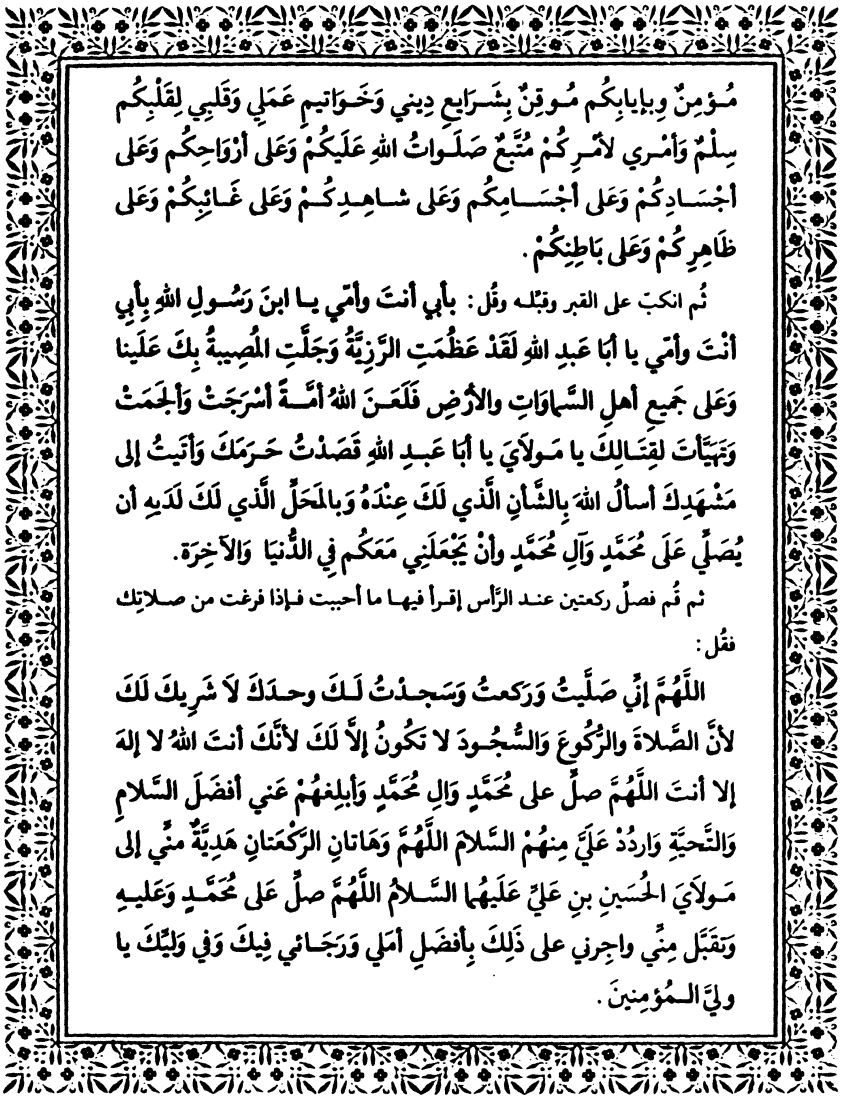
When you visit a dignitary of a special social or political status, you are expected to follow a protocol of etiquette which you may have to learn from a secretary or a protocol specialist. Muslims believe that the soul never dies; it only travels from one stage of life to another. The Holy Qur'an tells us that we should not consider those who die in defending His cause as dead; they are living though we are not aware of it; here is the Qur'anic proof: "And do not reckon those who are slain in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay! They are living with their Lord, receiving their sustenance" (Qur'an, 3:169).

So, when you visit Husain's sacred shrine or greet it from a distance, wherever you may be in Allah's spacious earth, you have to observe certain basic principles of etiquette such as having ablution and wearing clean clothes. There are many statements you can recite, but we have chosen this one which is known as "ziyarat warith," visiting the heir, the one who inherited the message and the knowledge of his pious predecessors. We would like to quote it here for you in its original Arabic text, then we will translate it for you:

زيارة الإمام الحسين (عليه السلام)

زيـــارة وارث

السَّلامُ عَليكَ يا وَارِثَ آدمَ صِفوةِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَا وَارِثَ نوحٍ نَبيِّ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يـا وَارِثَ إبْـراهيمَ خَليلِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَـا وَارِثَ مُوسى كَليمِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَليـكَ يَا وَارِثَ عِيسى رُوحِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَا وَارِثَ مُحَمَّدٍ حَبيـبِ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَا وَارِثَ أمِيرَ المؤْمِنينَ عَلَيهِ السَّلامُ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يا ابـنَ مُحَمَّدٍ الـمُصطفىٰ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَا ابنَ عَلِيٍّ الـمُرتَضى السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَا ابنَ فَاطِمةِ الزَّهرَاءِ السَّلامُ عَليكَ يا ابنَ خَدِيجَةِ الكُبْرى السَّلامُ عَليكَ يَا ثَارَ اللهِ وَابنَ ثارِهِ وَالوِتْرَ المَوْتُورَ أشهَدُ أنَّكَ قَدْ أقَمْـتَ الصَّلاةَ وَآتَيْتَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأمَرْتَ بِـالمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَيْتَ عَنِ المُنكَرِ وَأطَعْتَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَـهُ حَتَّى أتَاكَ اليَقِينُ فَلَعَنَ اللهُ أمَّةً قَتَلَتْكَ وَلَعَنَ اللهُ أمَّـةً ظَلَمَتْكَ وَلَعَنَ اللهُ أمَّـةً سَمِعَتْ بِـذلِكَ فَرَضِيَتْ بِـهِ يَـا مَـوْلايَ يا أبَـا عَبـدِ اللهِ أشْهَـدُ أنَّكَ كُنتَ نُـوراً فِي الأصْلابِ الشَّـامِخَةِ وَالأرْحَـامِ المُطَهَّـرَةِ لَمْ تُنَجِّسْكَ الجاهِليَّـةُ بِـأنجَاسِهـا وَلَمْ تُلْبِسكَ مِن مُـدْلَهِمَّاتِ ثِيـابِها وأشْهَدُ أنَّـكَ مِنْ دَعائِمِ الـدِّينِ وَأرْكَـانِ الـمُؤْمِنينَ وأشْهَدُ أنَّكَ الإمامُ البَرُّ الـتَّقِـيُّ الـرَّضِيُّ الزَّكِيُّ الهادِي المَهْدِيُّ وَأشْهَدُ أنَّ الأئِمَّـةَ مِنْ وُلْـدِكَ كَلِمَـةُ التَّقْـوَى وَأعْـلامُ الهُدَى وَالعُـرْوَةُ الـوُثْقَى وَالحُجَّةُ عَلى أهْلِ الدُّنْيا وَأُشْهِدُ اللهَ وَمَـلائِكَتَهُ وَأنْبِيَاءَهُ وَرُسُلَهُ أنِّي بِكُمْ



مُـؤمِنٌ وبِإيابِكُم مُـوقِنٌ بِشَـرايِعِ دِيني وَخَـواتيمِ عَمَلِي وَقَلبِي لِقَلْبِكُم سِلْمٌ وَأمْـرِي لأمْـرِكُمْ مُتَّبِعٌ صَلَـواتُ اللهِ عَلَيكُمْ وَعَلى أرْوَاحِكُم وَعَلى أجْسَـادِكُمْ وَعَلى أجْسَـامِكُم وَعَلى شـاهِـدِكُـمْ وَعَلى غَـائِبِكُمْ وَعَلى ظَاهِرِكُمْ وَعَلى بَاطِنِكُمْ.

ثُم انكبّ على القبر وقبّله وقُل: بأبي أنتَ وأمّي يـا ابنَ رَسُـولِ اللهِ بِأبِي أنْتَ وأمّي يا أبَا عَبدِ اللهِ لَقَدْ عَظُمَتِ الرَّزِيَّةُ وَجَلَّتِ المُصِيبةُ بِكَ عَلَينا وَعَلى جَمِيعِ أهلِ السَّماوَاتِ والأرْضِ فَلَعَـنَ اللهُ أمَّـةً أسْرَجَتْ وَألجَمَتْ وَتَهَيَّأتْ لِقِتَـالِكَ يا مَـولايَ يا أبَا عَبـدِ اللهِ قَصَدْتُ حَـرَمَكَ وَأتَيتُ إلى مَشْهَدِكَ أسألُ اللهَ بِالشَّأنِ الَّذي لَكَ عِنْدَهُ وَبالمَحَلِّ الَّذي لَكَ لَدَيهِ أن يُصَلِّي عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وأنْ يَجْعَلَنِي مَعَكُم فِي الدُّنيَا وَالآخِرَة.

ثم قُم فصلِّ ركعتين عنـد الرَّأس إقـرأ فيهـا ما أحببت فـإذا فرغت من صـلاتِك فقُل:

اللَّهُمَّ إنِّي صَلَّيتُ وَرَكعتُ وَسَجـدْتُ لَـكَ وحـدَكَ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَكَ لأنَّ الصَّلاةَ والرُّكُوعَ وَالسُّجُـودَ لا تَكُونُ إلاَّ لَكَ لأنَّكَ أنتَ اللهُ لا إلهَ إلا أنتَ اللَّهُمَّ صلِّ على مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأبلِغهُمْ عَني أفضَلَ السَّلامِ وَالتَّحيَّةِ وَارْدُدْ عَلَيَّ مِنهُمْ السَّلامَ اللَّهُمَّ وَهَاتانِ الرَّكْعَتانِ هَدِيَّةٌ منِّي إلى مَـولايَ الحُسَينِ بنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيهُما السَّـلامُ اللَّهُمَّ صلِّ عَلى مُحَمَّـدٍ وَعَليـهِ وَتقَبَّل مِنِّي واجِرني على ذَلِكَ بِأفضَلِ أمَلِي وَرَجَـائي فِيكَ وَفِي وَلِيِّكَ يا وليَّ الـمُؤمِنينَ.

TRANSLATION:

Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of Adam, the one chosen by Allah (as His

vicegerent on earth)! Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of Noah, the prophet of Allah! Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of Abraham, the Friend of Allah! Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of Moses who spoke to Allah! Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of Jesus, the Spirit of Allah! Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of Muhammed, the one loved by Allah! Assalamo Alaikum, O heir of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be with him! Assalamo Alaikum, O son of Muhammed, the chosen one! Assalamo Alaikum, O son of Ali, the one with whom Allah and His Messenger are pleased! Assalamo Alaikum, O son of Fatima al-Zahra! Assalamo Alaikum, O son of Khadaja al-Kubra! Assalamo Alaikum, O revolutionary for the cause of Allah and the son of a revolutionary for the cause of Allah, the oppressed one who is yet to receive redress and the son of an oppressed one who has not been redressed! I testify that you upheld the prayers, paid the zakat, enjoined what is right, prohibited what is wrong, and obeyed Allah and His Messenger till death overtook you; so, the curse of Allah be on a people who killed you, and the curse of Allah be on a people who oppressed you, and the curse of Allah be on those who heard about you being oppressed and were pleased thereby! O master! O father of Abdullah! I testify that you were a light in the lofty loins and purified wombs: the jahiliyya never polluted you nor spread its garments over you! And I further testify that you are among the pillars of the creed and the corner-stones of the believers! And I further testify that you are the Imam who is kind, pious, pure, guiding to righteousness and is rightly guided, and I testify that the Imams from among your offspring are the embodiment of piety and the flag-poles of guidance, the strong niche and the argument against the people of the world! And I further implore Allah, His angels, prophets and messenger, to testify that I believe in you, being convinced that you shall return according to the tenets of my faith and the conclusions of my deeds, and that my heart is at ease with whatever pleases you, and my will is subservient to yours! The blessings of Allah be upon you, upon your souls, upon your bodies, upon your being, upon those present from among you and those absent, upon what you reveal and what you conceal.

Having thus saluted the Imam, you should kiss the tomb then say the following:

By my parents (do I swear), O son of the Messenger of Allah, by my parents (do I swear), O father of Abdullah, that the calamity is great and the catastrophe magnanimous, and it has afflicted us and all the residents of the heavens and the earth, so may the curse of Allah be upon a people that gathered their forces to fight you, O master, O father of Abdullah! I have come to your sacred site and desired to be at your shrine, pleading to Allah by the status which you enjoy with Him to bless Muhammed and the progeny of Muhammed and to permit me to be with you in the life of this world and in the life hereafter

After that you should perform two prostrations (rek'at) at the Imam's head, and you may recite in them whatever suras you wish. Once you have finished your prayers, you should recite the following:

O Allah! I have performed my prayers, and I have knelt and prostrated to You, and only to You, the One and Only God, there is no partner with You, for the prayers, the kneeling and the prostrating cannot be to anyone but to You, since You are Allah, there is no god but You! O Allah! I plead to You to bless Muhammed and the progeny of Muhammed and to convey the best of my Salam to them and the best of salutation and, O Lord, do convey their own greeting to me! O Allah! These two rek'at are a gift from me to my master al-Husain son of Ali, peace be with both of them! O Allah! Bless Muhammed and bless him, and do accept it from me and reward me for it with the best of what I anticipate, and my hope rests upon You, and upon Your servant, O Master of the believers!

PART IV

HUSAIN'S SUCCESSORS: NINE INFALLIBLE IMAMS (ع)

The hero of Kerbala', Imam Husain (ع), was succeeded by nine sinless and infallible Imams who led the Islamic nation and are still leading it to the Straight Path, the path of happiness in the life of this world and salvation in the life to come. Following is a brief account of these Imams (ع)[1].

1) IMAM ALI IBN AL-HUSAIN ZAIN AL-ABIDIN (ع)

Imam Husain (ع) was succeeded as the nation's spiritual leader by his only surviving son Ali, nicknamed "Zain al-Abidin," the best of those who worship the Almighty, and also "as-Sajjad," the one who quite often prostrates to Allah. Ali was born on the fifteenth of Jumada II, 38 A.H. (November 19, 658 A.D.) when his grandfather, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), was administering the affairs of caliphate at Kufa. Kerbala' used to be a suburb of Kufa, but it later expanded into a large city, due to the shrine built for Imam Husain (ع), a shrine which many tyrants, including the fanatical Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, attacked, looted, and tried unsuccessfully to obliterate, and housing a prestigious theological center.

Ali's graceful personality was the combination of Arab and Persian nobility. On paternal side, he inherited the spiritual grace of the Prophet (ص), while through his mother, Shahr Banu, daughter of the last Persian emperor Yazdajerd, he inherited the dignity of the Persian royal dynasty. How did this great-grandson of the Prophet (ص) get to have a Persian princess as his mother?! In order to get the answer to this question, we have to review history going back to the time of the Prophet of Islam (ع).

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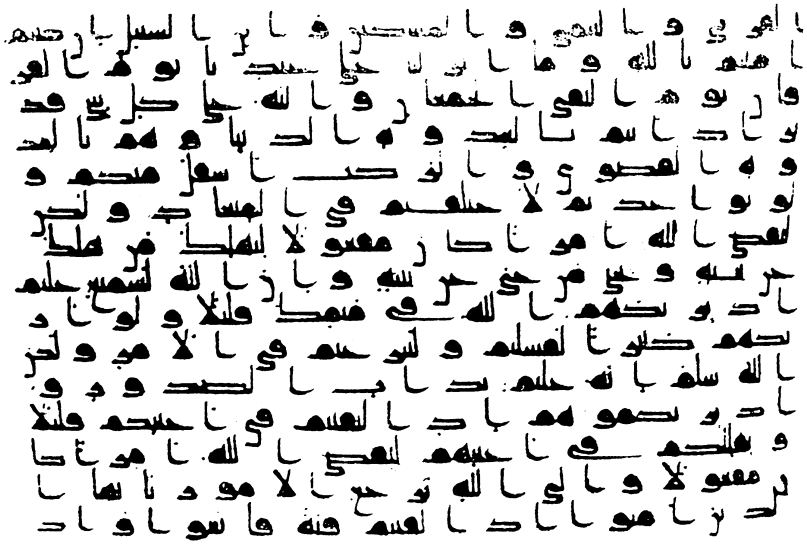
1 In the writing of this chapter, I utilized one of the books which I edited: *Biographies of Leaders of Islam* by Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqwi, published in 1990 by Imam Husain Foundation, P.O. Box 25-114, Beirut, Lebanon.



القران المنسوب خطه للامام زين العابدين « ع »

A page from the Holy Qur'an believed to be hand-written by Imam Zain al-Abidin (as)

In 595 A.D., young Muhammed (ص) visited Syria for the second time for a couple of months as a businessman trading on behalf of his wealthy relative Khadaja whom he married in the same year. His first visit to Syria took place in 582 A.D. in the company of his uncle Abu Talib, great-grandfather of Imam Zain abidan (ع). During this second visit, one of his observations was that a feud was brewing between the then mightiest nations on earth: the Romans and the Persians, each vying for hegemony over Arabia's fertile crescent. Indeed, such an observation was quite accurate, for after only a few years, a war broke out between these mightiest nations that ended with the Romans losing it, as the Holy Qur'an tells us in Chapter 30 (The Romans), which was revealed in 7 A.H./615-16 A.D., only a few months after the fall of Jerusalem to the Persians, just to win in a successive one. Only four years prior to that date, the Persians had scored a sweeping victory over the Christians, spreading their control over Aleppo, Antioch[1], and even Damascus. The loss of Jerusalem, birthplace of Christ Jesus son of Mary (ع), was a heavy blow to the prestige of Christianity. Most Persians were then following Zoroastrianism, a creed introduced in the 6th century before Christ by Zoroaster (628-551 B.C.), also known as

1 The city of Antioch is situated on the banks of the river al-asi (Orontes). It was founded about 300 B.C. by Celeucus I (Nicator) who died in 280 B.C. Celeucus I was a general of Alexander the Great. Antioch is the city where the followers of Jesus Christ were called "Christians" (rather than Nazarines) for the first time. It is the seat of a Melchite, or Maronite, and a Jacobite patriarch. It fell to the Persians in 538 A.D., to the Arabs in 637 A.D. (16 A.H.), to the Byzantians from 969 - 1084 A.D. (358 - 477 A.H.), to Seljuk Turks in 1085 A.D. (478 A.H.), to the Crusaders in 1098 A.D. (491 A.H.), to Egyptian Mamlukes in 1268 A.D. (666 A.H.), and to Ottoman Turks in 1516 A.D. (922 A.H.). It was transferred to Syria by Western powers in 1920 (1339 A.H.) but restored to Turkey in 1939 A.D. (1358 A.H.). This is why the reader sometimes may see Antioch identified as a Syrian town and some other times as Turkish! What a busy little town!

Zarathustra, whose adherents are described as worshippers of the "pyre," the holy fire. "Persia," hence, meant "the land of the worshippers of the pyre, the sacred fire." Modern day Iran used to be known as "Aryana," land of the Aryan nations and tribes. Some Persians had converted to Christianity as we know from Salman al-Farisi who was one such adherent till he fell in captivity, sold in Mecca and freed to be one of the most renown and cherished sahabis and narrators of hadith in Islamic history, so much so that the Prophet of Islam (ع) said, "Salman is one of us, we Ahl al-Bayt (People of the Household of the Prophet)."

The war referred to above was between the then Byzantine (Eastern Roman) emperor Heraclius (575 - 641 A.D.) and the Persian king Khusrau (Khosrow) Parwiz (Parviz) or Chosroes II (d. 628 A.D.). It was one of many wars in which those mighty nations were embroiled and which continued for many centuries. Yet the hands of Divine Providence were already busy paving the path for Islam: the collision between both empires paved the way for the ultimate destruction of the ancient Persian empire and in Islam setting root in that important part of the world. Moreover, Muhammed's offspring came to marry ladies who were born and raised at Persian as well as Roman palaces. Imam Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Muhammed's grandson and our Third Holy Imam and father of Imam Zain al-Abidin, married the daughter of the last Persian emperor Jazdagird (Yazdegerd) III son of Shahryar and grandson of this same Khusrau II. Jazdagerd ruled Persia from 632 - 651 A.D. and lost the Battle of Qadisiyya to the Muslim forces in 636, thus ending the rule of the Sassanians for good. Having been defeated, he fled for Media in northwestern Iran, and from there to Merv[1], an ancient Central Asian city near modern day Mary in Turkmenistan (until very recently one of the republics of the Soviet Union), where he was killed by a miller. The slain emperor left two daughters who, during their attempt to escape, following the murder of their father, were caught and sold as slaves. One of them, Shah-Zenan, ended up marrying our Third Holy Imam, al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), whereas her sister married the renown scholar and acclaimed muhaddith (traditionist) Muhammed son of the first Muslim caliph Abu

1 Merv is an ancient city located in a large oasis of the Kara Kum desert, Turkmenistan (formerly part of the Soviet Union). During the Abbaside period, it served as the capital of ancient Persia and a thriving center of Islamic culture.

Bakr. Shah-Zenan was awarded a royal treatment and was given a new name in her own Persian mother tongue: Shahr Banu, which means "mistress of the ladies of the city." The marriage between her and Imam Husain (ع) produced our Fourth Holy Imam Zain al-Abidin, or as-Sajjad, namely Ali ibn al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

After the Battle of Qadisiyya, Shahr Banu was brought in custody to Medina. With the age-old racist attitude still alive, not too many Arabs would have expressed due respect to her. But it was the humane chivalry of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) who paid full regard to this royal prisoner whom he married to his noble son Husain (ع), as explained above. Imam Zain al-Abidin was, thus, the grandson of Imam Ali (ع) and the Persian emperor Jazdagird (Yazdegerd) III son of Shahryar, rendering him in high esteem by both Arab and Persian nations.

Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) could not enjoy the love of his mother for a long time. She died soon after giving birth to him. At the age of two, his grandfather Imam Ali (ع) was also martyred. He was, thus, brought up and instructed by his father Imam Husain (ع) and by his uncle Imam Hasan (ع). He was twelve when Imam Hasan (ع) died and the burdens of the Imamate fell on Husain's shoulders. The cunning of Mu'awiyah, the then Umayyad ruler of Syria, led to the tragedy of Karbala' during the reign of his son Yazid; therefore, youthful Zain al-Abidin watched the pace of the events which culminated in that terrible massacre. Imam Husain (ع), who was leading a peaceful life in Medina, arranged the marriage of his son to Fatima daughter of Imam Hasan (ع), thus ensuring that the series of Imamate would continue even in the face of coming events.

Upon his departure from Medina to Mecca, then from Mecca to Kerbala', Imam Husain (ع) took his son Ali Zain al-Abidin, who was then twenty-two years old, with him. It cannot be ascertained whether Zain al-Abidin fell ill during the journey or after reaching Karbala. On the tenth of Muharram, 61 A.H./October 10, 680 A.D., he was too ill to move. As access to the Euphrates was blocked for three days and water was extremely scarce, the illness of Zain al-Abidin intensified. For the most part of that day, he lay unconscious and could not participate in

the battle which was carried on by all the male members of his family. So when Imam Husain (ع) bade his family farewell and went to the battlefield, he could not talk with his son Zain al-Abidin. Providence had perhaps destined Zain al-Abidin to be tested in another way when he was to lead his distressed family as prisoners.

Immediately after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (ع), the ruthless enemies turned to his tents to burn and plunder, as the reader has already come to know. The overwhelming grief, the flames of burning tents, the tumult among the widowed ladies and orphans must have taken its toll on the sensitive Sajjad. Neither tongue nor pen could have described the psychological impact. But the son of Husain (ع) maintained his composure and spiritual serenity. In spite of illness and crushing distress, he kept the grace of a true believer. Having said the night prayers on that fateful eve, he lay in prostration with his forehead on the ground and his tongue repeating these phrases all night long till dawn:

There is no deity but Allah in all certainty;
There is no god but Allah in truth and faith;
I bear witness to this in submission and humility.

Next day, Omer ibn Sa'd assembled all his slain soldiers, performed the funeral prayers for them and arranged for their burial, leaving the corpse of Imam Husain (ع), Prophet Muhammed's grandson, and those of his faithful adherents uncovered, unshrouded, and unburied, simply lying on the ground. It was a most painful sight for Zain al-Abidin to pass through the site of the onslaught accompanied by the ladies, all being captives. He was shocked to realize that he could not bury his kith and kin due to his captivity.

Not less heart-rending might have been the event when this pillaged caravan was brought to the court of Ibn Ziyad, governor of Kufa. Al-Sajjad might have remembered that it was the same town where once his grandfather Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) ruled as caliph and the ladies of the household were the royalty. Ibn Ziyad now rejoiced over his victory as the Prophet's family was brought as captives.

From Kufa these people were sent to Damascus. When their caravan entered the capital, it noticed how the bazaars were festively decorated and people were embracing each other, congratulating each other. The agony of humiliation suffered by Imam Husain's helpless folk was immeasurable, yet Zain al-Abidin still stood and carried out Imam Husain's mission of guiding the nation.
Having been released from confinement in Damascus, Zain al-Abidin went with his family to Medina to lead a quiet life, but that city was now in revolt against Yazid's cruel regime. Political parties pressured Zain al-Abidin to join them, but he knew their unreliability; therefore, he declined to do so. So, when Yazid's army invaded Medina, the invaders did not harass Zain al-Abidin's family.

Yet he was greatly shocked to see how for three days the invading host, led by Muslim ibn Uqbah, tied their horses at the Prophet's mosque, turning the sacred place into a filthy stable filled with horses' refuse, killing hundreds of innocent people and raping chaste women and children. It was too intolerable for the Imam who had to practice a great deal of control of his feelings. When different revolutionary parties rose to avenge Husain's innocent blood, he wisely kept aloof from them. He deemed their uprisings as untimely, and he kept himself occupied in worship and preaching through excellent supplications, setting an example of forbearance and endurance.

Undoubtedly, Sulayman ibn Surad al-Khuza'i or al-Mukhtar ibn 'Ubaidah al-Thaqafi avenged Imam Husain's precious blood. Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) had compassion for them; he prayed for al-Mukhtar's success and used to often inquire about those who were captured and executed. Certainly al-Mukhtar relieved the Imam's wounded heart by punishing the culprits. But the Imam was so cautious that his outward appearance gave the impression that he was indifferent, so much so that the cruel government could not suspect him of any subversion.

His whole lifespan was a time of trouble for the Prophet's family and for their supporters. A few years after Yazid's death, the ruthless Umayyad government put to death a large number of supporters of the Prophet's family at the hands of al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi. It kept

a constant surveillance over their activities and communications through its undercover agents. Under such circumstances, it was impossible for Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) to propagate the Prophet's teachings or guide the public in the open, so he lived Islam and made his life an example for others to emulate.
After the tragedy of Kerbala', the Imam lived 34 years under very odd circumstances. During that entire period of time, patience and fortitude were his main characteristics. Staying away from worldly pursuits, he kept himself busy by either worshipping his Lord or narrating the heart-rending events of Kerbala', thus keeping its memories alive. He wept whenever he remembered his father and whenever he saw food or water, reflecting upon the thirst and hunger of his father, Imam Husain (ع).

In spite of the quiet life Imam as-Sajjad (ع) was leading, the Umayyad government considered him a potential threat to the regime. Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan ordered the governor of Medina to arrest him and take him into custody to Damascus. There, he remained confined for three days, but the Almighty Allah and the spiritual influence of Imam as-Sajjad (ع) made Abd al-Malik ashamed of his cruel behaviour, so he ordered him to be released and sent back home.

It was characteristic of the Prophet's family, particularly the twelve Imams (ع), to personify the excellence of the human perfections. Imam as-Sajjad (ع) was a true copy of his ancestors. In both Kerbala' and Kufa, he demonstrated extreme patience and courage. In Medina, he proved to be most forbearing and forgiving. Once, an insolent person spoke to Imam as-Sajjad (ع) in an abusive and taunting tone. The serene, high-spirited Imam replied saying, "May Allah forgive me if you have told the truth or forgive you if you are wrong." The man was impressed by his noble conduct and lowered his head in shame as he said, "In reality, what I said was wrong." When another person tried to slander him, the Imam (ع) ignored him. The impudent fellow raised his voice saying, "It is you whom I meant." Imam as-Sajjad (ع), with an air of loftiness, replied, "And it is you whom I ignored." The Imam's reply echoed the Qur'anic verse in which the Almighty asked the Prophet (ص) to "Hold to forgiveness; command what is right, but turn away from the ignorant" (Qur'an, 7:199).

Hisham ibn Isma'eel behaved insolently towards Imam as-Sajjad (ع). Omer ibn Abd al-‘Aziz, the only righteous Umayyad caliph, came to know about it and wrote Imam as-Sajjad (ع) saying that he had all intention to punish the rogue, but Imam as-Sajjad (ع) nobly replied, "I do not like that the man be harmed on my account."
Service of the nation and generosity to it were his outstanding traits. In the darkness of dreary nights, he used to carry flour and loaves of bread to the needy. Many of them did not know who the benefactor was because he always hid his face. It was only when Imam as-Sajjad (ع) died that those needy people came to know who he was. In addition to all these virtues, even opponents acknowledged his knowledge and admitted that none could match him in jurisprudence and religious sciences. Yet he told people that one should not boast about the nobility of his ancestors. Whenever he went to another town, he avoided revealing his name or illustrious lineage. When asked about the reason, he humbly said, "It is not fair for me to trace my lineage to the Holy Prophet (ص) since I do not have his virtues."

His ocean of knowledge was sought by the most distinguished scholars and theologians of the time, and many rose to a lofty status after obtaining such knowledge from him. They came to him from all parts of Arabia, the Middle and Far Easts, and from Africa. The list of individuals who benefitted from his knowledge and thus became scholars in their circles includes, according to Bihar al-Anwar of allama Majlisi: Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, Thabit ibn Dinar, al-Qasim ibn Muhammed ibn Abu Bakr (grandson of first caliph Abu Bakr), Ali ibn Rafi, al-Dhahhak ibn Muzahim al-Khurasani, Hamid ibn Musa al-Kufi, Abul-Fadl al-Sudair ibn Hakim al-Sairafi, Abdullah al-Barqi, the poet al-Farazdaq[1], Furat ibn Ahnaf, Ayyub ibn al-Hasan, Abu Muhammed

1 One of the greatest of all Arab poets, al-Farazdaq was born in Basra in about 641 A.D. and died in about 732 A.D. His real name is Hammam ibn Ghalib ibn Mujashi al-Darmi al-Tamimi. He was contemporary to another very famous poet, Jarir, with whom he had exchanged extensive literary criticism which lasted al his lifelong. Al-Farazdaq once praised Imam as-Sajjad with a poem considered as one of the best masterpieces of Arab poetry, and he did so in the presence of then caliph Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik who asked him why he did not compose one like it in his own praise. Al-Farazdaq

al-Qarshi al-Saddi, Tawoos ibn Kaisan al-Hamadani, Aban ibn Taghlib ibn Rabah, Qays ibn Rummana, Abu Khalid Wardan al-Kabuli (of Kabul, Afghanistan), Sa'd ibn al-Musayyab al-Makhzami, Omer ibn Ali ibn al-Husain and his brother Abdullah, Jabir ibn Muhammed ibn Abu Bakr (another grandson of the first caliph), and many, many others. The most distinguished of his followers are these great persons: Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, Amir ibn Wa'ila al-Kinani, Sa'd ibn al-Musayyab ibn Hazan, and Sa'd ibn Jihan al-Kinani. Among the tabieen, the most distinguished were: Sa'd ibn Jubayr, Muhammed ibn Jubayr ibn Mutim, al-Qasim ibn 'Awf, Isma'eel ibn Abdullah ibn Ja'far, Ibrahim ibn Muhammed ibn al-Hanafiyya and his brother al-Hasan, Habib ibn Abu Thabit, Abu Yahya al-Asadi, Abu Hazim al-Araj, Salamah ibn Dinar al-Madani, and many, many others. The most famous of those who narrated hadith from him were: al-Zuhri, Sufyan ibn Uyainah, Nafi, al-Awzai, Muqatil, Muhammd ibn Ishaq, among others. Authors who quoted the traditions transmitted through him were: at-Tabari, Ibn al-Bay, Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Ibn Batta, Abu Dawud, the authors of *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, *Asbab an-Nuzul*, *Al-Targhib wal-Tarhib*, *Al-Fa'iq*, *Al-Mustafa*, and others. These were certainly not his contemporaries, yet they verified and recorded the traditions which he had narrated.

As regarding the great poet al-Farazdaq, to whom reference is made above, we would like to quote his masterpiece poem for the enjoyment of the Arabic-speaking readers. The poem praises Imam Zain al-Abidin in the most beautiful way, actually too beautiful to render into English or any other language:

رائعة الفرزدق .. في مدح الإمام زين العابدين بن الحسين بن علي[1]

هذه قصيده للفرزدق يمدح بها الإمام زين العابدين بن الحسين بن علي

رحمه الله وهي من أجمل ماقال الفرزدق.....

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said, "Had your grandfather been like his grandfather (ع), and had your father been like his father (ع), and had your mother been like his mother (ع), I would have done so." Hisham was so angry that he ordered him to be jailed at a place called Usfan, located between Mecca and Medina, where he continued to compose poetry taunting and belittling Hisham who finally had to set him free, hoping he would leave him alone and stop the barrage of poems exposing him and his likes from among Banu Umayyah.

وسبب القصيدهـ هو/ حج هشام بن عبد الملك فحاول أن يلمس الحجر الأسود فلم يستطع من شدة الازدحام فوقف جانباً، وإذا بالامام مقبلاً يريد لمس الحجر فانفرج له الناس ووقفوا جانباً تعظيماً له حتى لمس الحجر وقبله ومضى فعاد الناس الى ما كانوا عليه. فانزعج هشام وقال: من هذا؟ وصادف أن كان الفرزدق الشاعر واقفاً فأجابه هذا علي بن الحسين بن علي ثم أنشد فيه قصيدته المشهورة التي يقول فيها:

هذا الذي تعرف البطحاء وطئته والبيت يعرفه والحلُّ والحرمُ
هذا ابن خير عباد الله كُلُّهمُ هذا التقي النقي الطاهرُ العلمُ
هذا ابن فاطمةٍ انْ كنت جاهله بجده انبياء الله قد ختموا
وليس قولك منْ هذا؟ بضائره العرب تعرف من انكرت والعجمُ
كلتا يديه غياثٌ عمَّ نفعهما يستوكفان ولا يعروهما عَدمُ
سهل الخليقة لاتخشى بوادره يزينه اثنان: حِسنُ الخلقِ والشيمُ
حمّال اثقال اقوامٍ اذا امتدحوا حلو الشمائل تحلو عنده نعمُ
ما قال لاقطْ الا في تشهده لولا التشهّد كانت لاءه نعمُ
عمَّ البرية بالاحسان فانقشعت عنها الغياهب والاملاق والعدمُ
اذا رأته قريش قال قائلها الى مكارم هذا ينتهي الكرمُ
يُغضي حياءً ويغضي من مهابته فلا يكلُّم الا حين يبتسمُ
بكفّهِ خيزرانُ ريحها عبق من كف اروع في عرنينه شممُ

يكاد يمسكه عرفان راحته ركن الحطيم اذا ما جاء يستلمُ
الله شرّفه قدماً و عظّمه جرى بذاك له في لوحة القلمُ
ايُّ الخلائق ليست في رقابهمُ لأوّليّه هذا اوله نِعمُ
من يشكرِ الله يشكر اوّليّه ذا فالدين من بيت هذا ناله الامَمُ
ينمي الى ذروة الدين التي قصرت عنها الاكف و عن احراكها القدمُ
من جده دان فضل الانبياء له وفضل امته دانت له الاممُ
مشتقة من رسول الله نبعته طابت مغارسه والخيم والشيمُ
ينشق نور الدجى عن نور غرته كالشمس تنجاب عن اشراقها الظلمُ
من معشرٍ حبهم دينٌ وبغضهمُ كفرٌ وقربهم منجى ومعتصمُ
مقدّمٌ بعد ذكر الله ذكرهمُ في كِلّ بدءٍ ومختوم به الكلمُ
إن عدَّ اهل التقى كانوا ائمتهم او قيل من خير اهل الارض؟ قيل همُ
لا يستطيع جوادُ بعد جودهم ولا يدانيهم قوم وإن كرموا
هم الغيوث اذا ما ازمة ازمت والاسد اسدُ الشرى والبأس محتدم
لاينقص العسر بسطاً من اكفّهم سيّان ذلك إن اثروا وان عدموا
يستدفع الشرُّ والبلوى بحبّهم ويسترِبُّ به والاحسان والنعمُ

His chief attribute which earned him the titles of "Zain al-Abidin" and "Sayyid al-Sajidan" was his sincere worship of the Almighty. He was an eyewitness to the tragedy of Kerbala', and the scenes of his near and dear ones being slaughtered were always fresh in his memory. Such

depressing events naturally make any ordinary person indifferent to all other normal activities of everyday life, but they could not make Imam as-Sajjad (ع) relax his fear of Allah. His complexion faded and his whole frame shook whenever the water for ablution was presented to him, or whenever he stood to say his prayers. When asked about the reason, he explained, "Can you at all imagine in Whose presence I am going to stand?! It is in the presence of the Lord of lords."

While putting on his pilgrimage garb, intending to utter "Labbayka Allahomma Labbayk!" (I am answering Thy Call, O Lord!), colour disappeared from his face. His whole frame shook, so much so that those who saw him inquired what was wrong with him. Imam as-Sajjad (ع) said, "I tried to say *Labbayk!*' but I feared lest the Lord of the House calls out: No admittance for you.'" Tears flooded his eyes so excessively that he ultimately fainted. Whenever everyone else prostrated before the pomp of haughty Umayyad monarchy, it was Imam as-Sajjad (ع) who demonstrated how the King of kings should be worshipped.

His supplications were later compiled and named Al-Sahafa as-Sajjadiyya, the book of as-Sajjad, which is dubbed "the Psalms of Muhammed's family." The reader who wishes to read some of its contents are referred to pp. 462 - 469 of my book titled Allah: The Concept of Allah in Islam (published by Ansariyan Publications). I feel honoured and humbled by the Almighty enabling me to translate such precious text. It is only He Who enables His servants to do whatever good they do, whatever useful knowledge they acquire and disseminate; He, and only He, is the source of all goodness.

The reign of the antagonistic Umayyad rulers never permitted Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) to deliver discourses and addresses as his grandfather Imam Ali (ع) did, nor to illustrate the creed as he had done. Later, Imam Muhammed al-Baqir and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع), son and grandson of Imam as-Sajjad respectively, had the opportunity to fathom the depths of religious problems at study circles attended by inquisitive students. But, alas, such a favourable atmosphere was not available to Imam as-Sajjad (ع). He, therefore, adopted quite a different method which no worldly power could obstruct. He suspended all

worldly contacts and took to hymns and prayers. The words of those prayers are a treasure-houses of theological mysteries and reflective of the relationship between the Creator and His creation. A collection of these hymns and prayers, known as Al-Sahafa al-Kamila, or Al-Sahafa as-Sajjadiyya, has survived despite all the odds. In the pages of this collection, we can find what we cannot perhaps attain even from reading lengthy addresses and discourses presented in a similarly appealing manner, if such can be found at all.

The calm and peaceful life of the Imam could not be tolerated by the cruel Umayyad regime. The Syrian monarch al-Walid ibn Abdul-Malik had him poisoned, and the Imam died inside the Medina jail on the 25th of Muharram, 95 A.H. (October 20, 713 A.D.). Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع) conducted the burial ceremony, laying him to rest in the graveyard of Jannat al-Baqa beside his uncle, Imam Hasan (ع). May the Almighty cut off the hands of the tyrants and those who support them wherever and whoever they may be...

2) IMAM MUHAMMED AL-BAQIR (ع)

He was named after his great grandfather Prophet Muhammed, peace be with him and his progeny, and he was called "al-Baqir" which means "the splitter of knowledge". His father is Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) and his mother is Fatima daughter of Imam Hasan (ع), the Prophet's grandson. His lineage, therefore, reaches the Prophet of Islam (ع) on both parents' sides. Imam Husain (ع), the younger grandson of the Prophet, is his grandfather. He has the unique attribute of having inherited the qualities of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and Fatima daughter of the Prophet Muhammed (ص).

The Imam was born on Rajab 1, 57 A.H./May 10, 677 A.D., seven years after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (ع), and he spent more than three years in the company of his grandfather Imam Husain (ع). He was an eyewitness to the tragedy of Taff, and he was contemporary to his father Imam as-Sajjad (ع) during the entire period of his Imamate. The Kerbala' tragedy was a troublesome and tumultuous period of time for the Prophet's offspring and their followers, supporters of Ahl al-Bayt (ع). Imam Ali's friends were always hunted, arrested, then hanged.

According to Al-Irshad of al-Mufid, Al-Fusal al-Muhimma of Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki, Vol. 3 of al-Ya'qubi's Tarikh (history), and Tathkirat al-Khawass of Ibn al-Jawzi, the great sahabi Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari narrates saying, "The Messenger of Allah, peace be with him and his progeny, said to me: You shall live long enough to meet one of the descendants of Husain who shall be named Muhammed and who shall split the core of knowledge; so, convey my Salam to him'."

According to Ikmal ad-Din wa Itmam al-Ni'ma, and on p. 252 of Shaikh as-Saduq's work, Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari asked the Messenger of Allah (ع) saying, "O Messenger of Allah, who are the Imams from the descendats of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)?" He (ع) answered: "Al-Hasan, al-Husain, masters of the youths of Paradise, then the master of the forbearing of his time, Ali ibn al-Husain, then al-Baqir Muhammed ibn Ali, and, O Jabir! You shall live to see him! So when you do, convey my Salam to him."

Vol. 42, p. 25 of *Bihar al-Anwar*, and also both *I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda* and *Kashf al-Ghumma fi Marrifat al-A'imma*, when Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) was on his death-bed, his will to his oldest son al-Hasan was: "O son! The Messenger of Allah (ع) ordered me to give you my books and weapons just as he had ordered me to take his books and weapons and to tell you to pass them over to your brother Husain before you die." Then he turned to Imam Husain (ع) and said, "... and the Messenger of Allah (ع) ordered that you (Imam Husain) should pass them on to your son Muhammed ibn Ali and to convey to him Salam from the Messenger of Allah and from me."

For three years, Imam al-Baqir (ع) enjoyed the cherished love of his grandfather Imam Husain (ع), and when he had to leave Medina, al-Baqir, too, was one of the family members who made the journey across the desert. Imam Husain (ع) left for Kufa and his journey terminated at Karbala'. Since the 7th of Muharram, when the Prophet's family was denied access to the water of the Euphrates, Imam al-Baqir (ع) suffered from the pangs of thirst till the tragedy was over. Providence, however, intended to preserve the Imamate by safeguarding his life, whereas even a baby like Imam Ali al-Asghar (ع)

had already been killed by an enemy arrow.

Like his father Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع), Imam al-Baqir (ع) could not physically participate in the battle. The 10th of Muharram, 61 A.H./ October 10, 680 A.D. brought its hideous events with Imam Husain (ع) gathering the corpses of his slain warriors all day long, the women wailing, the children crying because of being extremely thirsty, startled and bewildered, then came the last farewell bidden by Imam Husain (ع), the murder of his baby Ali al-Asghar, the return of Imam Husain's horse to his master's tent without his master... Young al-Baqir (ع) witnessed all these events. Al-Baqir witnessed the tents being burnt, the children reeling in panic, the heartless enemy plundering, and the ladies of the Prophet's family being deprived even of their sheets and scarves. Who can possibly imagine how young Imam al-Baqir (ع) felt, or what a permanent impression such scenes had left on his mind?

On the next day, Imam al-Baqir (ع) witnessed the ladies of the Prophet's family being shackled with chains, hand-cuffed, then transported as captives by the enemy the entire distance from Kerbala' to Kufa, then to Damascus. Having been released, he witnessed their journey back to Medina, again passing by Kerbala'. The profoundly sad impressions could never have been erased from the memory of young Imam al-Baqir (ع).

After Kerbala', Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) led a very calm life, staying aloof from the pursuits of this materialistic world. Secluded from the society, he spent his time either weeping as he reminisced on the agonies of his father Imam Husain (ع), or worshipping the Almighty, while the heart of his son Imam al-Baqir (ع) was being squeezed painfully as he watched helplessly. In this sad environment, Imam al-Baqir (ع) grew up studying the manners of his saintly father and availing himself from his knowledge and noble conduct.

Imam al-Baqir (ع) was in the full bloom of youth, ascending the heights of physical and spiritual perfection, when his revered father died. On his death-bed, Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) handed over to Imam al-Baqir (ع) a box containing books of religious sciences exclusively known to this illustrious Ahl al-Bayt (ع). Calling together all his offspring, he

resigned them to the care of Imam al-Baqir (ع), now named the fifth in the successive series of the successors of the holy Prophet. He was then 38 years old.

The Umayyad monarchy was heading towards its decline and decay. The cruelties inflicted on the Hashemites, especially the massacre at Kerbala', had produced shock waves throughout the Muslim world. Yazid witnessed the aftermath of Kerbala' and may have regretted his heinous sins. After a brief rule, he died in 64 A.H., and his son Mu'awiyah II succeeded him briefly then abdicated. The later Umayyad rulers, therefore, were fully aware of the consequences of the atrocities of their predecessors. The bloody battles waged by the Tawwaban movement, the penitents, led by Sulayman ibn Surd al-Khuza'i and later by al-Mukhtar, led to a powerful uprising against the Umayyads. Everyone now demanded to avenge the holy blood of Imam Husain (ع) and those who defended the Prophet's family. That movement ruffled the peace of the ruling despots and shook the foundations of their government. The good result was that Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع) had the opportunity to free himself from the clutches of the tyrannical government. He had at that time better chances to peacefully guide the Muslim nation to the Right Path.

The Imams, the Prophet's leading offspring, had rivers of knowledge in their bosoms which were blocked by the oppressing government and thus their waters could not moisten the lips of the thirsty. In the days of Imam al-Baqir (ع), when the grip of the oppressive government loosened a little bit, the confined river of knowledge gushed forth, irrigating the fields of faith-seeking hearts. Having displayed his great skill in solving tough religious problems, he was called al-Baqir (discloser or splitter of hidden knowledge). The number of those who benefitted from him and learned the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) reached thousands of seekers of knowledge. Many others, belonging to different schools of thought such as Imam Zuhri, Imam Awzai, Attar ibn Jarih, or Hafiz ibn Ghiyath, the judge, who all are considered as outstanding traditionists of the Sunni sects, came to seek knowledge from him and are counted among his students.

Volume 3 of Manaqib al Abi Talib states that Abdullah son of second

caliph Omer ibn al-Khattab was asked once for the solution of a complex theological problem, and he could not provide one. "Go to that young boy," Omer said to the person who raised the question, pointing to Imam al-Baqir (ع), "Ask him and tell me what his answer will be." The inquirer approached Imam al-Baqir (ع), obtained the answer, and went back to the son of Omer ibn al-Khattab to tell him what treasures of knowledge he had just acquired, and Abd-Allah commented: "They are a family immersed in knowledge."
Al-Irshad by al-Mufid, in a chapter on the Imamate of al-Baqir (ع), and in Hilyat al-Awliya' and Tathkirat al-Khawass of Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson, Abdullah ibn Ata' al-Makki says, "I never saw scholars shrink as I saw them in the presence of Abu Ja'far Muhammed ibn Ali ibn Husain. And I saw al-Hakam ibn 'Uyainah, despite his greatness, looking like a young boy before his teacher."

One of the testimonies to the excellence of his political thought is his advice to the renowned Umayyad caliph Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz in which he said, "I advise you to regard young Muslims as your sons, the adults as your brothers, and the elderly as your parents; therefore, be kind to your sons, stay in touch with your brothers, and be generous to your parents."

One of his students, Muhammed ibn Muslim, is quoted in Vol. 46, as saying, "Every time I faced a complex (theological) problem, I had to seek its solution from Abu [the father of] Ja'far, till I asked him about thirty thousand questions." One of his companions, Jabir ibn Yazid al-Jufi, may Allah be pleased with him, said once, as quoted in the same references which also quotes Al-Ikhtisas, saying, "Abu Ja'far narrated to me as many as seventy thousand traditions." Advising Jabir ibn Yazid al-Jufi, he said, "I admonish you regarding five things: If you are wronged, do not commit wrongdoing to others; if your are betrayed, do not betray anyone; if you are called a liar, do not be furious; if you are praised, do not be jubilant; if you are criticized, do not fret and think of what is said in criticism: if you find in yourself what is criticized about you, then your falling down in the eyes of Allah, when you are furious about the truth, is a much greater calamity than your falling down in the eyes of people. And if you are the opposite of what is said (in criticism) about you, then it is a merit you acquired without having to tire

yourself in obtaining it."

The dissemination of religious and scientific knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) was achieved by Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع). Out of the benefits gained from such a high-ranking mentor, the students wrote several books on various branches of knowledge. Here is a brief description of some of his disciples and their works which reflects the extent of Islamic learning imparted by the Imam:

1. Aban ibn Taghlib. He was the famous lexicographer and reciter of the Holy Qur'an who wrote the work Ghara'ib al-Qur'an, the first book explaining the intricate diction of the Holy Qur'an. He died in 141 A.H./758 A.D.

2. Abu Ja'far Muhammed ibn al-Hasan ibn Abi Sarh al-Rawasi, the famous scholar of recitation, syntax and exegesis. Kitab al-Faisal and Maani al-Qur'an are two among five books which he authored. He died in 101 A.H./720 A.D.

3. Abdullah ibn Maimun, Abul-Aswad al-Du'Ali. A biography of the Holy Prophet and another book expounding on Paradise and Hell are among his works. He died in 105 A.H./723 A.D.

4. Atiyyah ibn Sa'd al-'Awfi. He wrote an exegesis of the Holy Qur'an in five volumes; he died in 111 A.H./729 A.D.

5. Isma'eel ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saddi al-Kabir (al-Saddi senior), the well-known author of Tafsir. He is frequently referred to by all Muslim writers of tafsir books as al-Saddi. He died in 127 A.H./745 A.D.

6. Jabir ibn Yazid al-Jufi. He committed to memory 50,000 (or 70,000 according to some biographers) traditions which he had heard from Imam al-Baqir (ع). He is quoted in Muslim's Sahih. He wrote several volumes on tradition, tafsir and jurisprudence. He died in 128 A.H./746 A.D.

7. Ammar ibn Mu'awiyah al-Wahni. A book on jurisprudence is his contribution. He died in 133 A.H./752 A.D.

8. Salim ibn Abi Hafsah (Abu Yousuf) al-Kufi. He is the writer of a book on jurisprudence. He died in 137 A.H./754 A.D.

9. Abdul-Mu'min ibn Qasim (Abu Abdullah) al-Ansari. He is the writer of a book on jurisprudence. He died in 147 A.H./764 A.D.

10. Abu Hamzah al-Thumali. He wrote a book on tafsir (exegesis) of the Holy Qur'an. Kitab al-Nawadir and Kitab al-Zuhd are among his works. He died in 150 A.H./767 A.D.

11. Zararah ibn Ayun, a high-ranking Shi'a scholar who wrote several books on tradition, jurisprudence and kalam. He died in 150 A.H./767 A.D.

12. Muhammed ibn Muslim. He was a great scholar who recorded 30,000 traditions which he learned from Imam al-Baqir (ع). He wrote many books, including the "Four hundred problems of halal and haram." He died in 150 A.H./767 A.D.

13. Yahya ibn Qasim (Abu Basar) al-Asadi. He was a revered scholar who wrote Kitab Manasik al-Hajj and Kitab Yawmun wa Lailah. He died in 150 A.H./767 A.D.

14. Ishaq al-Qummi. He has a book on jurisprudence.

15. Isma'eel ibn Jabir al-Khashami al-Kufi. He wrote many volumes on hadith (tradition) and one on jurisprudence.

16. Isma'eel ibn Abdul-Khaliq. He was a high ranking jurist and had a book to his credit.

17. Bard al-Asqaf al-Azdi. He wrote on jurisprudence.

18. Al-Harith ibn al-Mughirah. He authored a book on the problems of jurisprudence.

19. Huthaifah ibn Mansur al-Khuza'i. He had a book on jurisprudence.

20. Hasan ibn Sirri al-Katib. He wrote one book.

21. Husain ibn Saur ibn Abi Fakhita, author of *Kitab al-Nawadir*.

22. Husain ibn Muhammed ‘Abidi al-Kufi; he is author of one book.

23. Husain ibn Mus'ab al-Bajali. He has a book to his credit.

24. Hammad ibn Abi Talha; he wrote one book.

25. Hamzah ibn Hamran ibn Ayun. He was nephew of Zurarah and author of one book.

These are quite a few scholars, traditionists and jurists who learned from the Ahl al-Bayt (ع), mostly from Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع), and safeguarded such knowledge by recording it in their books. Later, in the days of the Imam’s son, namely Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq, hundreds of volumes were written–the sources from which such valuable collections of hadith as *Al-Kafi, Man la Yahdharuhu Al-Faqih, Tahdhib al-Khasa’il, Al-Istibsar*, etc. were compiled. These books now form the fundamentals of Shi'a learnings. In addition to these, you may read his biography and the ahadith which he narrated in at-Tabari’s *Tarikh*, in al-Balathiri, al-Salami, al-Khattab, Abu Dawud’s *Sunan*, al-Isfahani, al-Zamakhshari, and in others.

His moral excellences were admired even by his foes. A Syrian lived in Medina and used to come to Imam al-Baqir (ع) frequently declaring that he was opposed to the Household. Yet, despite his prejudice, he admitted that, "The high morality and eloquence of Imam al-Baqir (ع) are too attractive to resist."

The author of *Tuhaf al-‘Uqul* quotes Imam as-Sadiq (ع) saying, “I entered the house of my father once and found him doling out eight thousand dinars as sadaqa to the poor, then he freed eleven slaves.”

In a chapter on the merits of Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع) in Vol. 3 of *Manaqib Ali Abi Talib*, and in Vol. 46 of al-Majlisi’s *Bihar al-Anwar*,

Sulayman ibn Qaram is quoted as saying, "Abu Ja'far Muhammed [ibn al-Hanafiyya], son of Imam Ali (ع), used to give us as much as five or six hundred or even a thousand dirhams, and he never tired of visiting his brethren."
Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) cooperated with his contemporary caliphs and offered sound counsel concerning the affairs of the Muslims. So did all the Imams who succeeded him, each following his example. None of them hesitated to offer advice to their contemporary rulers, and Imam al-Baqir (ع) was no exception. The Umayyad government had till then no currency of its own. The Byzantine currency of the eastern section of the then Roman Holy Empire was the valid tender in Damascus as well. But during the reign of al-Walid ibn Abdul-Malik, there rose a rift between him and the Byzantine ruler when the latter decided to stamp a new currency with a phrase which al-Walid considered as derogatory to the Holy Prophet (ص). This created suspense among the Muslims. Al-Walid convened a committee in which prominent Muslim scholars participated. Imam al-Baqir (ع) expressed his opinion that the Muslim government ought to mint its own currency on one side of which it should stamp the statement "La Ilaha Illa Allah" and on the other the statement "Muhammedun Rasul-Allah," (There is no god but Allah; Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah). The opinion was unanimously approved and new Islamic coins were minted.

It was only during the caliphate of Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz, the only pious Umayyad caliph, that the Prophet's progeny enjoyed a brief period of peace which lasted for only two years and five months, the duration of Omer's government. He lifted from them a great deal of atrocities and prohibited the cursing of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) on the pulpits on Friday, substituting it with this verse of the Holy Qur'an: "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition" Qur'an, 16:90 (an-Nahl).

When the Imam met caliph Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz, he found him weeping for the injustice inflicted by his predecessors upon their subjects. The Imam admonished him with pieces of wisdom till the

caliph sobbed, knelt down and begged the Imam for more. Then the Imam told Omer what wrongdoing he came to ask him to rectify, and it was none other than the estate of Fadak which the Messenger of Allah (ع) had left as inheritance to his daughter Fatima (ع) and her descendants. According to Vol. 4 of *Bihar al-Anwar*, Omer wrote: "*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*. This is what Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz had given back to Muhammed ibn Ali to rectify the wrongdoing: Fadak."

Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik succeeded Omer ibn Abd ul-Aziz as the ruler, and he was a stone-hearted, immoral, miser and racist. His prejudice against non-Arab Muslims caused him to double the taxes non-Arabs had to pay, and his reign was a replay of the bloody days of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and those of the blood-thirsty al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi[1]. It was then that the revolution of Zaid ibn Ali broke out as a continuation of the revolution of Imam Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), but Hisham was swift in crushing it. Dr. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, in his book *Tarikh al-Islam* ("History of Islam"), quotes contemporary historians testifying that Hisham ordered to crucify Zaid ibn Ali and then burn his corpse and throw the ashes in the Euphrates.
Although Imam al-Baqir (ع) never expressed any interest nor participated in political activities except when the rulers invited him to, since his peaceful way of living was devoted to people's spiritual guidance, he was not tolerated by the government. Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik wrote his governor over Medina instructing him to send Imam al-Baqir (ع) together with his son [later Imam] Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) to Damascus, intending to insult them both. When they reached Damascus, he kept them waiting for three days. On the fourth day, he called them to his presence. He sat on a throne surrounded by his

1 The extent of al-Hajjaj's passion for shedding blood can be realized from this recorded and referenced incident: He entered once al-Heera's jail and commented about the prisoners saying, "I see heads the time for whose harvesting has come." They were all beheaded and their heads were brought to him at his government mansion. He ordered a carpet to be placed on the heads whereupon he sat and was served his lunch. Having finished eating, he said, "This has been the tastiest meal I have ever had." More about al-Hajjaj is stated in another footnote above. No wonder some Muslims do not teach Islamic history at all: It indicts them.

nobility, fully armed. In the center of the courtyard, a target was set on which the elite were shooting arrows on bet. Islam prohibits betting or gambling or any way of making money without working hard to earn it. As soon as the Imam entered, Hisham bluntly asked him to shoot arrows with others. Imam al-Baqir (ع) asked to be excused, but Hisham insisted; he planned to ridicule the Imam. Since the Imam led a secluded life, Hisham thought that he might not have had anything to do with martial arts. Compelled by Hisham, Imam al-Baqir (ع) took the bow. Handling it skillfully, he shot a few arrows continuously, all sitting straight in the very heart of the center. A shout of praise burst from the throats of the astonished elites standing right and left. Hisham, thus outwitted, began to discuss the problems of Imamate and the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt (ع). Now he clearly saw that the Imam's stay in Damascus might lead to popular respect for Ahl al-Bayt (ع), so he permitted the Imam to return home to Medina. Inwardly, his enmity of the Prophet's family had increased.

Hisham harassed not only the Prophet's family but also their followers, dignitaries and scholars. He issued an order to execute Jabir ibn Yazid al-Jufi, the most distinguished among the Imam's scholars, but the Imam foiled his attempt by advising Jabir to feign madness as the only way to escape execution.

The more the Umayyads learned about the Imam's prestige and popularity, the more intolerable his existence became. At last they resorted to the same soundless weapon, poison, which used to be applied by those cunning monarchs quite often to eliminate their opponents or suspects. A saddle was presented to the Imam to which poison was skillfully applied. When he mounted on it, poison affected his whole body. After spending a few days suffering the pain of his ailment, he expired on the seventh of Thul-Hijja, 114 A.H./January 28, 733 A.D. He was laid to rest underneath the same dome in Jannat al-Baqi where Imam Hasan (ع) and Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) already lay.

3) IMAM JAFER AL-SADIQ (ع)

His name is Ja'far, and he is known as al-Sadiq and Abu Abdullah, son of Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع) son of Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) son of Imam Husain (ع). His mother was Umm Farwah daughter of Qasim

son of Muhammed son of [first caliph] Abu Bakr who was one of the seven most prominent jurists of Medina. Thus, the sixth Imam has an impressive lineage.

The Imam came to this world on Rabi' al-Awwal 17, 83 A.H./April 20, 702 A.D., the same lunar date when his great grandfather, the Holy Prophet (ص), was born. At his birth, his father, Imam al-Baqir (ع), was 26, and his grandfather, Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع), was 44. The Prophet's family joyfully welcomed this auspicious addition.

Till the age of twelve, Ja'far was brought up under the guidance of his grandfather Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) whose main concern was to worship his Maker and reflect on the tragic events of Kerbala'. Twenty-two years had lapsed since then, yet the remembrance of that shocking tragedy was still quite fresh in his memory. So, as soon as Ja'far gained understanding, he was profoundly impressed by the continuous grief of his grandfather, so much so that he felt as if he himself was present during that tragedy. He also contemplated on the presence of his father, Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع), although only three years old, at that gruesome scene. Ja'far as-Sadiq considered it as his duty to convene the recitation gatherings (majalis) about that sorrowful event.

He was twelve years old when his grandfather Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع) expired. From then on and till the age of 31, he spent his time under the supervision of his father Imam al-Baqir (ع). It was the time when the Umayyad politics were tottering and Muslims who were approaching Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع) by the thousands seeking his knowledge, wisdom and guidance. Whether at Medina or in travels, Ja'far al-Sadiq was always with his father. When Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik summoned Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع), Ja'far al-Sadiq accompanied him, as stated above.

In 114 A.H./732 A.D., Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (ع) died, and the responsibilities of Imamate devolved on the shoulders of now Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq. Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik was ruling in Damascus and political disturbances were rampant. The call for seeking revenge against Bani Umayyah was strong among the public, and several descendants of Imam Ali (ع) were preparing themselves in the hope of

overthrowing their corrupt regime. Most prominent among them was Zaid bin Ali, the respected son of Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع). His religious zeal and piety were known throughout Arabia. He was a well versed hafiz of the Holy Qur'an and had taken the field against the tyranny of the Umayyads.

This was a precarious juncture for Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. As regarding hatred of the Umayyads, he agreed with his uncle Zaid for whom he had a great deal of respect. His far-sighted judgment could clearly see that his rising against the well-organized royal forces was of no avail; he, therefore, did not join him for all practical reasons. But he was compassionate towards him and sympathetic to his cause, and he asked him to be judicious. As a great host of Iraqis had sworn their allegiance to him, Zaid was now quite optimistic. He valiantly fought the royal forces but was in the end killed.

The vengeful enemies were not satisfied with Zaid's death. They exhumed his dead body from the grave, severed his head, sent it as a trophy to Hisham and hanged the body at the gate of Kufa where it remained for several years. One year after Zaid's martyrdom, his son Yahya earned the same ancestral honour. Imam Ja'far was surely moved by these tragic events, but he was destined to carry out the duties of spreading the religious knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (ع).

The last days of the Umayyads' reign of terror were ruffled by political disturbances. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq witnessed the rise and fall of many of their kings. After Hisham, al-Walid ibn Yazid ibn Abdul-Malik, then Yazid ibn al-Walid, then Ibrahim ibn al-Walid, then Marwan al-Himar [the donkey] ascended the throne. The capture and death of the latter terminated the monarchy of tyrannical Umayyads.

During the last phase of tottering Umayyad rule, the Hashemites were actively engaged in their anti-Umayyad activities. The Abbasides took advantage of their efforts and secretly formed an association whose members had sworn to transfer the government from the Umayyads to the Hashemites who really deserved it. It is clear that to rule the Islamic world was not the job of every Hashemite. It was the right of those divinely appointed descendants of the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali (ع)

whom Allah had chosen to lead humanity. But these high-thinking souls never wished to take undue advantage of the situation with the aid of cunning tactics.

In short, the Imams who descended from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (ع), never tried to acquire power through political trickery and opportunism. But the Abbasides, who also were Hashemites, no doubt took the opportunity by the forelock. Availing themselves of the silence shown by the Imams, and of the compassion the people had for the Hashemites, the ‘bbasides realized their chance to rise to power. But when they established themselves on the throne, they became enemies of Imam Ali’s posterity in the same degree or more than that which had been adopted by the heartless Umayyads. Details of this will be narrated in the biographies of later Imams.

The first to start the movement from among the Abbasides was Muhammed ibn Ali ibn ‘Abdullah ibn al-Abbas who sent his agents throughout Persia to secretly obtain the oath of allegiance to the Hashemites’ cause from the Persians. On Muhammed’s death, his son Ibrahim succeeded him. Meanwhile, the martyrdom of Zaid and his son Yahya had fanned the flames of revolution against the Umayyads. The Abbasides took advantage of it, increasing their influence in Iraq through Abu Salamah al-Khallal. Slowly but steadily, their power base increased. Through the sincere support of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, all Western Persia and Khurasan came under their control and the Umayyad governor had to flee. The name of the Umayyad ruler was dropped from Friday sermons, having been replaced by that of Ibrahim ibn Muhammed.

The Umayyads till then were under the impression that the disturbances were merely local protests, but now the government spies reported that it was a full-fledged movement initiated by Ibrahim ibn Muhammed ibn Abbas who resided at Jabulqa. Soon Ibrahim was arrested, imprisoned and mercilessly killed. His family escaped the royal wrath with other Abbasides and sought refuge with Abu Salamah in Iraq. When the news reached Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, he sent an army to Iraq which defeated the Umayyad forces and annexed Iraq.

Abu Salamah al-Khallal, dubbed “Minister of the Prophet’s Progeny,” was especially compassionate towards Imam Ali’s offspring. He wrote letters to the prominent heads from among them inviting them to accept and share the royal power. One of such letters was addressed to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. In political struggles, such opportunities are considered golden, but the Imam declined the offer and remained devoted to his duty of disseminating knowledge.

Those who supported the Abbasides’ cause, in addition to the followers of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, swore the oath of allegiance to Abul-Abbas al-Saffah. On Rabi' II 14, 132 A.H./November 30, 749 A.D., the latter was acknowledged as the ruler and caliph of the Muslim world. Establishing themselves in Iraq, the Abbasides advanced towards Damascus. Marwan assembled his forces and confronted them, but his army was defeated. He had to flee for his life but was later captured in Egypt and killed.

Thereafter, a reign of terror followed: The Umayyads were massacred publicly; the dead bodies of the monarchs of their dynasty were exhumed and treated in a most shocking manner; thus, the revenge upon the oppressors, the law of nature, was implemented through the Abbasides. In 136 A.H./753 A.D., al-Saffah, the first Abbaside caliph, died and was succeeded by his brother Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, commonly known as al-Dawaniqi.
They Abbasides raised the banner of standing and protecting the rights of Ahl al-Bayt (ع), thus succeeding to rally the public around them on this very pretext, and it was their war-cry as well. But when they came to power and destroyed the Umayyads, they naturally feared lest the world should be disappointed and disillusioned with them, or lest a movement should start demanding that the caliphate must be vested upon the descendants of Imam Ali (ع) and Fatima instead of the Abbasides. Abu Salamah was inclined to the descendants, and he was a candidate to support such a movement; therefore, in spite of all the favours which he had done to the Abbasides, he was the first to fall victim to their ingratitude. He was put to death during the reign of al-Saffah. Persia was under the control of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani. Al-Mansur arranged to have him murdered most treacherously.

Al-Mansur was no longer apprehensive of the interference of any influential person in his government. He, therefore, turned all his tyranny against the Sayyids, descendants of the Prophet (ص) themselves. On mere suspicion, al-Mansur would begin to destroy the Sayyids. The prominent among them were subjected to atrocities. Muhammed son of Ibrahim, who was the most handsome among them and was, therefore, called the "silken", was walled alive[1].

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) was sadly affected by those events. When the descendants of Imam al-Hasan ibn Ali (ع) were all fettered, shackled and banished from Medina, he watched their plight with a saddened heart from the flat roof-top of his house. With flooded eyes he was heard saying, “Oh! Medina is no longer a sanctuary or a haven of peace...” Then he expressed his sorrow for the descendants of the Ansar who stood idly by thus: “The early Medenites (Ansar) had invited the Holy Prophet to Medina under the oath that they would protect him and his descendants just as they would protect their own kith and kin. But today the descendants of those very Ansar act as silent onlookers,and none stands up to protect the Prophet’s offspring.” Having said these words, he returned to his house and fell ill, unable to move from bed for twenty days.

Among the afore-mentioned prisoners was the aged Abdullah Mahd son of Imam al-Hasan ibn Ali (ع) who had to suffer the hardships of a

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1 So that the reader may not misunderstand this statement, let him be informed that whenever the Abbasides built a house or a mansion, they used to bring a number of descendants of the Prophet (ص) whom they would place inside the new structure’s column; then they would continue the construction, making their bodies part of the construction, slowly killing them by suffocation, keeping their corpses inside the structure... For numerous such incidents, the reader is referred to the book titled *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin* by “Abul-Faraj” Ali ibn al-Husain ibn Muhammed ibn Ahmed ibn Abdul-Rahman ibn Marwan ibn Abdullah ibn Marwan ibn Muhammed ibn Marwan ibn al-Hakam ibn Abul-As ibn Umayyah ibn Abd Shams ibn Abd Munaf, of the Umayyads of Quraish, famous as “al-Isfahani.” This great Sunni author was born in Isfahan, Iran, in 284 A.H./897 A.D. and died in 356 A.H./967 A.D. He wrote more than 31 books, the most famous of which are: *Al-Aghani, Jamharat Ansab al-Arab, Nasab Bani Taghlib*, and, of course, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyeen*. Mankind seldom produces writers as prolific and as fair this Isfahani. May he be rewarded most generously by the Almighty, *Ameen.*

prolonged imprisonment. His son Muhammed (known as "Thul Nafs al-Zakiyya") rose against the oppressive government and fell fighting near Medina in 145 A.H./762 A.D. The head of the young warrior was severed then sent to his aged father in prison, a shocking sight which the worn-out old man could not bear, falling dead shortly thereafter. Another son of Abdullah Mahd, namely Ibrahim, also fought against al-Mansur's army and fell fighting near Kufa. In the same way, Abdullah son of Thul Nafs al-Zakiyya, Musa and Yahya, brothers of Thul Nafs al-Zakiyya, were all killed mercilessly. Many Sayyids were used alive as part of the building materials of walls as explained in a footnote above.

In spite of all these atrocities which have been described very briefly here, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) went on silently propagating the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (ع). As a result, even those who did not acknowledge him as the Imam nor knew his prestige and lineage, bowed before his knowledge and prided in being counted among his students.

Al-Mansur wanted to diminish the esteem in which Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع) was held by the people. He tried to bring persons to compete with him who all proved incapable of arguing not with him but with his own students. These fellows admitted that their counterparts had acquired the religious learning from the Prophet's Progeny (ع). The haughty ruler, therefore, ignored them but continued to undermine the popularity of the Imam. Failing in all his efforts, he decided to harass, arrest or murder him. In every town and city, hired agents were posted to monitor the activities of the Shi'as so that anyone suspected of supporting the Imam would be arrested. Al-Mu'alla son of Khunais was one of the many Shi'as who were thus arrested and murdered in cold blood.

The Imam himself was summoned from Medina to the royal palace five times, each time being in one way or another nothing but harassment. Al-Mansur, however, could never find sufficient grounds to order his imprisonment or execution. On the other hand, the consequent stay of the Imam in Iraq only expanded the circle of those who wanted to learn the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt from him. Perceiving this, al-Mansur

ordered him to be sent back to Medina. Even there, he was not spared persecution. Through saboteurs, his house was once set on fire but Providence put it out and nobody was harmed.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) was one of those Infallibles who were created by the Almighty to be role models of moral excellence. The particular virtues of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع), which were recorded by historians, included: hospitality, charity, the helping of the needy in secrecy, the fair treatment of the relatives, forgiveness, patience and fortitude.

Once a pilgrim visiting the Prophet's mosque in Medina fell asleep there. On waking up, he hurriedly searched his belongings and found out that his purse containing one thousand dinars was missing. Looking around, he saw Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) saying his prayers in a corner of the mosque. Bewildered and ignorant of the greatness of the Imam, he accused him of having picked his purse. The Imam asked about its contents and was told that it contained one thousand dinars. The Imam asked the stranger to follow him to his house where he paid him the amount from his own money. When the stranger came back to the mosque satisfied, once more he checked his property and found his purse intact, wrapped in a bundle. Greatly ashamed of his conduct, he went back to the Imam's house, profusely apologized and asked him to take his money back. The Imam appeased him with these words: "We never take back what we once give away."

Another event of the Imam's trust in Allah, the Sustainer, deserves mention here. During the days of scarcity and famine, one naturally tries to hoard up as much provisions as might suffice his needs for a long time. Once, the Imam asked his household's manager, Trenchab, "The price of corn is rising day by day. How much corn is there in our warehouses?" Trenchab said that the Imam should have no reason to worry since there was a large quantity of it to sustain them over a long period of time. The noble Imam then ordered him thus: "Sell out all the corn today and let us face the situation along with others." Then he directed him thus: "Pure wheat flour shall not be used in my kitchen. Let it be mixed with an equal quantity of oat flour. We must share the misfortune with the needy as long as it takes."

The Imam (ع) used to respect the poor more than the rich and value their hard work. Trade was his occupation, yet he liked to personally do manual work in his orchards. One day, while wielding the spade and sweating profusely from top toe, someone offered to do the work for him, but the Imam (ع) said, "It is no insult to bear the heat of the summer sun for the sake of my family."

To be kind to the slaves and bondmaids was the main characteristic of the Prophet's Progeny (ع). Sufyan al-Thawri has narrated a surprising event in this regard. He said, "Once I went to pay him a visit. I saw his complexion fading. On my asking him the reason, the Imam explained: I had forbidden my folk from ascending the stairs to the roof-top. Just now, as I entered the house, I saw a nursing maid with my babe in her arms ascending the stairs. She was so frightened that she became nervous, and the baby fell down and died. I do not grieve on the death of the baby as much as I grieve on her fright.'" Then he prepared to arrange for the shrouding and burial of his dead baby.

The Imam's profound knowledge of religious and other sciences was reputed throughout the entire Islamic world, and even Western scholars have paid him tribute, admiring his knowledge and character. One famous Western reference discussing the Imam is the renown *Encyclopedia Britannica* where he is discussed on p. 498, Vol. 5, of its *Micropedia*. People came to him from distant regions to quench their thirst for his ocean of knowledge. The number of his students reached once four thousand. Among them were scholars of jurisprudence, tafsir (exegesis), *hadith*, etc. Theologies from other creeds also went there to debate with his students. When they went away vanquished and defeated, the Imam used to explain to his students their (the latter's) own weak points so that they might be more careful in the future.

Sometimes he himself debated with the opponents especially the atheists. Apart from religious sciences, he used to teach some students mathematics, chemistry, medicine, etc. Jabir ibn Hayyan[1] of Tarsus, the famous pioneer of physics, chemistry and mathematics, was his disciple

1 Jabir's name is immortalized in both the East and the West: it is from his first name that the science of Algebra is derived. He was its pioneer and founder.

who wrote about four hundred treatises based on his mentor's instruction. The jurists who learned from him and authored several volumes of books on jurisprudence can be counted by the hundreds and their students by the thousands.

Such a great teacher and scholar can never be ambitious for power. But the government of his time regarded his popularity as a constant threat. It finally resorted to the use of their soundless weapon, poison, to put an end to this great man, just as other governments did to his ancestors and offspring. History always repeats itself; it is a wheel in an endless motion. The governor of Medina was directed to offer him poisoned grapes the efficacy of which ended his life on Shawwal 15, 148 A.H./December 4, 765 A.D. when he was 65. His funeral was arranged by his son and successor, Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع), who led the burial prayers. He was laid to rest in the same compound at Jannat al-Baqi where Imam al-Hasan (ع), Imam Zain al-Abidin (ع), and Imam al-Baqir (ع) are buried...

4) IMAM MUSA AL-KAZIM (ع)

His name is Musa; "al-Kazim" and "Abul-Hasan" are his titles. He is usually called Musa al-Kazim. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع) was his father whose lineage, by five generations, reaches the Holy Prophet (ص). His mother, Hamida Khatun, was a North African Berber. He was born on Safar 7, 128 A.H./November 8, 745 A.D. The knowledge of his father, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع), saturated the Islamic world. Although two elder sons, Isma'eel and Abdullah, had already illuminated the house, the addition of the new-born brought unequalled happiness to the family, probably because Providence had decided to maintain the continuity of Imamate through him.

For twenty years, he remained under the care of his father Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع). It was due to the virtues, teachings and the dissemination of the knowledge of the Prophet (ص) through Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) that Shi'a Muslims are called "Ja'faris," taught by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع). The scholarly achievements of Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) were so conspicuous that the world acknowledged Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) had, indeed, appointed him as his successor as commanded by the Almighty. It is proven by this act that Imamate does not, as a rule, go to the eldest son or be inherited. It is the blessing bestowed by the Almighty upon the Infallible ones who are gifted with divine knowledge. The principle is further established by the fact that such a great responsibility had once before passed from Imam Hasan (ع) to his brother Imam Husain (ع) rather than to Hasan's descendants. The Imamate of Musa al-Kazim (ع), therefore, illustrates that Imamate is based on personal perfection, not necessarily on descent.

In 148 A.H./765 A.D., upon the death of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع), the responsibilities of Imamate devolved on Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع). This was during the reign of al-Mansur al-Dawaniqi, the tyrant who ordered the slaying of countless Sayyids, descendants of the Prophet of Islam (ع). The number of those imprisoned, oppressed, thrown into the dark cells of prisons or bricked up in the walls alive, was known only to Allah. Imam Ja'far himself had been subjected to harassment, tyranny and intrigues, the last of which was poison which ended his life.

On his death-bed, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) predicted that the life of his successor would also be ended in the same way. In order to avert this danger as much as he could, he nominated, in his will, five trustees to look after his family. Al-Mansur, the Abbaside ruler, was one of them. The other four were: Muhammed ibn Sulayman, the then governor of Medina, his son Abdullah al-Aftah, (later Imam) Musa al-Kazim (ع),

and their respected mother Hamida Khatun.

Imam Ja'far's prediction was correct. When the news of his death reached al-Mansur, the latter made a show of grief by thrice repeating these words: Inna lillahi wa inn ilayhi rajioon, "We are Allah's and to Him is our return." He also said, "Who can be Ja'far's equal now...?" But secretly he wrote to the governor of Medina saying, "If Ja'far, by way of a will, appointed any trustee, put him to death immediately." The governor replied: "He has appointed five trustees, the first of whom is your majesty." Having read this reply, al-Mansur remained silent, since the sanctity of a will cannot be violated. Then, pondering over the situation, he said, "In this case, these persons cannot be slain." Accordingly, for the next ten years, al-Mansur did not try to harass Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) who carried out the duties of Imamate peacefully. Al-Mansur was, moreover, preoccupied with building the new capital, Baghdad, which he completed just one year before his death. He had, therefore, little time to think about harassing Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع).

Al-Mansur al-Dawaniqi died in 158 A.H./775 A.D. and was succeeded by his son al-Mahdi. In the beginning, al-Mahdi did nothing to humiliate or disrespect Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع), but later he fostered the old enmity against Imam Ali's descendants. In 164 A.H./781 A.D., having performed the *hajj*, he took the Imam with him from Mecca to Baghdad where he imprisoned him. For one year, the Imam suffered the hardship of imprisonment. Then the ruler realized that he was mistreating a descendant of the Prophet (ص), so he released the pious Imam (ع). In 169 A.H./785 A.D., al-Mahdi died and was succeeded by his brother al-Hadi who ruled for only 13 months. On his death, Harun ar-Rashid ascended the throne. The latter's attitude towards Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) was very antagonistic, causing Imam al-Kazim (ع) to die in prison.

Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) was one of the illustrious Imams whom the Almighty Allah had set as a paragon of moral excellence. Each member of this illustrious family personified the best of virtues and moral excellences. Each one of them was the embodiment of goodness. The Seventh Imam excelled in tolerance and forgiveness, so much so that

he was titled al-Kazim (ع), the suppressor of fury. Never was he heard speaking roughly or looking sternly. Even in the most unpleasant situations, he wore a smile. This was in accordance with the saying of his ancestor Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) that a believer keeps his grief confined in his chest while wearing a smile on his face.

One government official of Medina was a persistent source of harassment to Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع), even using abusive language regardig Imam Ali (ع). But the Imam always directed his followers not to abuse him in return. When his malicious conduct became too rude to be tolerated, they sought permission to retaliate against him. The Imam appeased them, promising to settle the matter himself.

Pacifying his followers thus, he went to the fellow's farm and treated him with such noble benevolence that the man felt ashamed of his conduct and subsequently changed his attitude and altered his conduct. Explaining this policy to his followers, the Imam asked them: "Was my behaviour better than the methods you suggested?" They admitted that it was. He thus carried out the instruction of his great ancestor Imam Ali (ع) which is recorded in Nahjul-Balagha: Subdue the enemy with kindness, since it is more effective than vanquishing him with force. Undoubtedly, this requires a correct judgment of the enemy's nature. With some enemies, one may say, good conduct does not bear any fruit; it is then that force must be met with equal or better force, rest assured. Imam Ali (ع) has, therefore, warned not to use this policy with the vile and the mean lest they should be encouraged to do more mischief. Consider this piece of advice when you deal with the enemies of Islam.

To vanquish the foe with goodness certainly requires the foresight the Imam possessed. Strictness is permissible only when the enemy's continuous vile conduct justifies retaliation or the use of force. If not, these dignified souls preferred to deal with him gently, so as to have a valid pretext against the opponent and leave no ground for him to justify his aggression.

Such was the noble method usually employed by the Family of the Prophet (ص). Imam Ali (ع), even on his death-bed, behaved liberally

with Ibn Muljim al-Muradi, his assassin who had dealt him a mortal blow only the day before. Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) showered his generosity on Muhammed ibn Isma'eel who carried out the orders of the Abbaside caliph to put an end to the Imam's life. It was Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) who aided him when he wanted to embark upon his journey with a grant of 400 dinars and 1,500 dirhams although he undertook this journey solely to poison the ears of the caliph against him.

Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) had to undergo a great deal of hardship. The academy of learning, which his father Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع) had established, could no longer be maintained. Other means to disseminate knowledge were beyond his reach. It was only through his noble personal behaviour that he was able to introduce the teachings of Prophet Muhammed (ص) and his Progeny (ع) to the public. This, indeed, is the best way to propagate Islam. You can talk about Islam as much as you want, but when one sees you doing something un-Islamic, your words will be forgotten, your reputation will be ruined, and your hypocrisy will be exposed. Talk is cheap; action is the true yardstick to measure one's piety; actions speak louder than words.

The Imam (ع) used to observe silence at gatherings or seminars, and he never spoke unless spoken to or someone asked him a question or requested him to solve a scientific problem. Nor did he ever initiate a conversation. In spite of this, he was held in very high esteem by friends and foes alike. All acknowledged his knowledge and noble personality. In view of his excessive worship at night, he was called "al-Abd al-Salih," i.e. the pious worshipper of Allah. No less famed was his generosity. He used to secretly help the beggars and the destitute who never got to know who their benefactor was till he had died. After the fajr (pre-dawn) prayers, he used to lower his forehead in prostration and remain in that position till the sun rose high in the heart of the sky. His recitation of the Holy Qur'an was attractive; he wept as he recited, and his audiences were deeply moved.

In 170 A.H./787 A.D., Harun ar-Rashid succeeded Abu Ja'far al-Mansur as the caliph. His ancestors' traditional cruelty towards the descendants of Imam Ali (ع) and Fatima (ع) was well in his view. The

revolt of Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hasan broke out. Violating all agreements and covenants, as was always customary of the Umayyads and the Abbasides, Harun threw Yahya into the choking dark dungeons then had someone kill him. Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) was in no way connected with Yahya's uprising. Rather, he had actually advised him against opposing the tyrannical government. But Yahya's action served to intensify the enmity which Harun harboured towards Imam Ali's descendants including, of course, Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع). To make matters even worse, the Prime Minister, Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki, poisoned Harun's ears by pointing out that Ja'far ibn al-Ash'ath (tutor of Harun's son, al-Amin, and a political rival of Yahya) was a follower of the Imam and that he planned to bring the Imam to power.

Although Yahya ibn Khalid intended just to entice Harun against Ja'far ibn al-Ash'ath, his plan proved to be fatal to Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع). In the same year, Harun came to Mecca to perform the hajj, and so did Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع). Here Harun watched with jealous eyes the sublime popularity which the Muslim multitudes demonstrated towards that sage. It was sufficient to flare up his rage. Muhammed ibn Isma'eel's hostility worsened the situation.

To understand these complications, let us ponder on the following facts: Isma'eel, Muhammed's father, was the eldest son of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ع), and he was expected to succeed his father as the Imam. But he died during the Imam's lefetime. The common notion was thus shattered. Yet some simpletons still held the view that Imam Ja'far's successor should be one of Isma'eel's offspring. Muhammed ibn Isma'eel and his followers, the Isma'eelis (or Isma'eelites, now a small off-shoot Shi'a sect), therefore, never acknowledged the Imamate of Musa al-Kazim (ع). Since his followers were a small minority, he outwardly expressed his loyalty to the family.

To discuss all means to annihilate Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع), Harun consulted Yahya al-Barmaki whom he instructed to collect complete reports about the Imam through one of the descendants of Imam Ali (ع). Yahya, an avowed foe of the Prophet's Progeny, recommended Muhammed ibn Isma'eel as the person who would supply all the details correctly. Accordingly, he was summoned to Baghdad.

When Muhammed ibn Isma'eel received the caliph's letter, he considered it a passport to power, prestige, and prosperity. But he was penniless and unable to prepare for the journey. He was, therefore, obliged to approach the same generous saint who demonstrated benevolence to friends and foes alike. The Imam knew fully well the motives behind the journey. He nevertheless inquired about its purpose. Muhammed explained that he was having hard times, being deeply in debt, and that he thought that the journey might bring him prosperity. The Imam said, "You need not go there; I promise to pay off all your debts and provide adequately for your sustenance." But Muhammed would not change his mind about going to Baghdad. Upon leaving, he paid the Imam a visit and requested a useful piece of advice. Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) remained silent. When he repeated his request, the Imam said, "Please see that you do not become a party in slaying me, and please do not be the cause of making my children orphans." Muhammed tried to turn from the point and asked for some appropriate advice. But the Imam refused to say anything more. When he got up to depart, the noble Imam gave him 450 gold dinars and 1,500 silver dirhams for the journey.

The result was exactly what the Imam had foreseen. Muhammed ibn Isma'eel reached Baghdad and stayed at the house of Prime Minister Yahya who introduced him to caliph Harun. The latter surrounded him with honours and inquired about the pace of events in Medina. Muhammed stated the circumstances most incorrectly, adding, "I never saw nor heard that a country is ruled by two kings." Asked to explain, he asserted: "As you are ruling here in Baghdad, Imam Musa al-Kazim rules there in Medina. From every town, revenues are delivered to him, and he claims to be your own equal in power."

These were the words Yahya al-Barmaki had instructed Muhammed to say to Harun who felt provoked and challenged. He sent Muhammed back after granting him ten thousand dinars. But Allah wished that Muhammed should not avail of this sizeable wealth. On that very night, he suffered from throat pain, and when the day dawned, the darkness of death closed on him. Harun heard the news and ordered to retrieve the cash! Muhammed's statement was not erased from Harun's memory

and he was resolved to put an end to the Imam's life.

In 179 A.H./795 A.D., Harun went to Mecca and Medina. He stayed in the latter city for a day or two after which he sent his men to arrest Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع). The Imam was not at home when the caliph's men came, so they went to the Prophet's tomb where he used to say his prayers. Having total disregard for the sanctity of the Prophet's grave, they arrested his descendant there and brought him before Harun. It was on the 20th of Shawwal of 179 A.H./795 A.D. that the Prophet's pious son was being fettered and taken prisoner while not even one Medenite dared to raise a finger against the tyrant. This lethargy of the unfeeling Muslims had also been witnessed on several occasions before that incident. As a matter of fact, these Medenites have been politically lethargic ever since, especially after the Wahhabis took control, by force, of the politics of their country...

Being apprehensive of any attempt which might be made to rescue the Imam, Harun ordered two camel-domes to be prepared in one of which he seated the Imam and sent him to Basra escorted by a sizeable military detachment. The other empty dome was sent to Baghdad with an equal number of soldiers in order to confuse any prospective rescuers and distract the attention of the people by keeping the place of imprisonment unknown. Was it not a shocking event that the Imam's family could not even see the Imam or bid him farewell? They only received the news that he had been imprisoned by the government. They were distressed to hear it and the Imam, too, was equally grieved for being separated from his loved ones without being able to bid them farewell.

Nobody knows what a zigzag route was followed; the journey to Basra took 47 days. There, the Imam remained in confinement for one year. The city's governor was asa ibn Ja'far, a cousin of Harun. In the beginning, he carried out Harun's orders. But he often wondered about the reasons for the imprisonment of the pious descendant of Prophet Muhammed (ص). He, therefore, became curious about the Imam's life, character and personality. The more he studied them and noticed his forbearance, the more he was impressed by his noble conduct. He conveyed his views to Harun in good faith, but the latter only became

suspicious of the intentions of his own cousin. He, therefore, ordered the Imam to be transferred to Baghdad where he put him under the custody of Fadl ibn al-Rabi'. Having come to know that Fadl was sympathetic to the followers (Shi'a) of the Prophet's Progeny (ع), he put the Imam under the custody of Yahya al-Barmaki, the notorious enemy of Ahl al-Bayt (ع). It seems that the Imam's sacred personality impressed everybody, so the tyrant thought it necessary to change his jailers.

The Imam was finally imprisoned in a dungeon under the charge of al-Sindi ibn Shahik, the ruthless and stone-hearted Chief of Police of Harun ar-Rashid . The Imam died on the 25th of Rajab 183 A.H./September 2, 799 A.D. at the age of 55. No respect was awarded to him at the time of his burial either. Rather, the corpse was carried to the grave-yard by men who were announcing his death in degrading tones. By this time, the people felt depressed about the fate of the elevated Imam and sadly accompanied the coffin with a sincere display of grief and respect. They buried him in a northern suburb of Baghdad now bearing his name: al-Kazimiyya, the city of Imam al-Kazim (ع), where his magnificent mausoleum now houses a reputed school of theology coveted by scholars and seekers of knowledge.

5) IMAM ALI AL-RIDA (ع)

He is Imam Abul-Hasan II, Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, the eighth in the series of the Imams from the Ahl al-Bayt (ع) of the Prophet. His birthplace is Medina, and his resting place is Tas (Iran). He was born in Medina on Friday, or Thursday, Thul-Hijja 11, or Thul-Qi'da, or Rabaul-Awwal, of the Hijri year 148 or the year 153. He died on Friday, or Monday, near the end of the month of Safar, or the 17th of Safar, or Ramadan 21, or Jumada I 18, or Thul-Qi'da 23, or the end of Thul-Qi'da, of the year 202 or 203 or 206. In his 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, al-Saduq states: "What is accurate is that he died on the 13th of Ramadan, on a Friday, in the year 203." There is a great deal of dispute regarding the name of his mother. Some say she was called al-Khayzaran; others say she was Arwi and her nickname was "the blonde of Nubia," while others say she was Najma and her nickname was "Ummul-Baneen." Others say she was called Sakan the Nubian; still others say she was called Takattum. Disputes exist also regarding the number of his offspring and their names. Some scholars say that they

were five sons and one daughter, and that they were: Muhammed al-Qani', al-Hasan, Ja'far, Ibrahim, al-Husain, and 'Aisha.

Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, in his book titled *Tathkiratul-Khawass*, says that the sons were only four, dropping the name of Husain from the list. Al-Mufid inclines to believe that the Imam did not have any son other than Imam Muhammed al-Jawad (ع), and Ibn Shahr Ashub emphatically states so, and so does al-Tibrisi in his *A'lam al-Wara*. Author of *Al-'Udad al-Qawiyya* states that the Imam (ع) had two sons: Muhammed and Musa, and that he did not have other descendants. In his claim, he is supported by *Qurb al-Isnad* where the author says that al-Bazanti asked al-Rida, "For years I have been asking you who your successor is and you keep telling me that it is your son even when you had no son at all, but since Allah has now blessed you with two sons, which one of them is he?" *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida* indicates that he had a daughter named Fatima. His life was characterized by melancholy from its beginning till its painful end. At the onset of his life, he witnessed the trials and tribulations which filled the life of his father Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع).

The Abbaside caliph al-Mahdi III ordered the Imam (ع) to go to Baghdad so that the caliph would secure from him promises and pledges that he would not oppose his authority nor mobilize a revolution against him, and the Imam (ع) did not go back home till al-Mahdi went back to his Lord with his shoulders bent by the load of the regime's sins and immoral actions. He was succeeded by the Abbaside caliph al-Hadi who tried to put an end to the life of the Imam, but he did not live long enough, so ar-Rashid acceded to the throne, thus the parching flames of the tragedy started incinerating the existence of the Alawis (Alawides) headed by Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع), and the dungeons of Baghdad, Basra, Wasit and other cities could not limit the regime's passion for seeking revenge against its opponents. Instructions issued by the government required the builders to fill the hollow building cylinders and columns with the still alive bodies of the elite from among Alawi youths as well as non-Alawi sympathizers. This ugly method of eliminating the government's opponents was not something invented by ar-Rashid ; it was a continuation of a custom started by al-Mansur who sought revenge against some Alawi youths as

history tells us.[1]

The Abbaside caliph al-Ma'mun decided to use the Imam (ع) as a bargaining chip between him and the Abbasides in Baghdad on one hand, and between him and the Alawis on the other, and also between him and the Shi'as of Khurasan as well. The ploy of relinquishing the throne was foiled when the Imam (ع) refused to accede to it.

It is worth mentioning here that when Imam al-Rida (ع) refused to accept the caliphate from the abdicating caliph, al-Ma'mun, or to take charge of the post of heir apparent to the throne, he had no reason except his own awareness of the real depth of the goal al-Ma'mun anticipated to achieve by his plan, and that the desire to abdicate was not to be taken seriously.

Imam al-Rida (ع) inherited the knowledge of his grandfather the Messenger of Allah (ع). History narrates a great deal about his scholarly stances and intellectual discourses. Imam Musa a-Kazim (ع) is reported to have often said to his sons, "Ali ibn Musa, your brother, is the learned scholar of the Descendants of Muhammed (ص); therefore, you may ask him about your religion, and memorize what he tells you for I have heard my father Ja'far ibn Muhammed more than once saying, The learned scholar of the family of Muhammed is in your loins. How I wish I had met him, for he is named after the Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع).'" Ibrahim ibn al-Abbas al-Sali is reported as having said, "I never saw al-Rida (ع) unable to provide the answer to any question he received, nor have I ever seen any contemporary of his more learned than he was. Al-Ma'mun used to put him to test by asking him about almost everything, and he always provided him with the answer, and his answer and parable was always derived from the Holy Qur'an."

Raja' ibn Abul-Dhahhak, who was commissioned by al-Ma'mun to escort al-Rida (ع) to his court, said once, "By Allah! I never saw anyone more pious than him nor more often praising Allah at all times,

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1 Ibn al-Atheer, Vol. 4, p. 375. "Al-Mansur," Muhammed ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Hasan, was brought in, and he was the most handsome man people ever saw. The Abbaside caliph asked him, "Are you the one nicknamed the yellow silk?" He answered, "Yes." He said, "I shall certainly kill you in a manner which I have not employed to anyone else," then he ordered him to be placed in a cylinder and it was built up on him while he was still alive; thus, he died inside it." al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 136, indicates likewise.

nor more fearful of Allah, the Exalted. People approached him whenever they knew he was present in their area, asking him questions regarding their faith and its aspects, and he would answer them and narrate a great deal of hadith from his father who quoted each of his forefathers till Ali (ع) who quoted the Messenger of Allah (ع). When I arrived at al-Ma'mun's court, the latter asked me about his behaviour during the trip and I told him what I observed about him during the night and the day, while riding or halting; so, he said, Yes, O son of al-Dahhak! This is the best man on the face of earth, the most learned, and the most pious.'"[1]

Al-Hakim is quoted in Tarikh Nishapur as saying that the Imam (ع) used to issue religious verdicts when he was a little more then twenty years old. In Ibn Majah's Sunan, in the chapter on "Summary of Cultivating Perfection," he is described as "the master of Banu Hashim, and al-Ma'mun used to hold him in high esteem and surround him with utmost respect; he even made him his successor and secured the oath of allegiance for him."

Al-Ma'mun said the following statement once in response to Banu Hashim: "As regarding your reaction to the selection by al-Ma'mun of Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع) as his successor, be reminded that al-Ma'mun did not make such a selection except upon being fully aware of its implications, knowing that there is none on the face of earth more distinguished, more virtuous, more pious, more ascetic, more acceptable to the elite as well as to the commoners, or more God-fearing, than he (al-Rida) is."[2]

Abul-Salt al-Harawi is quoted as saying, "I never saw anyone more knowledgeable than Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (ع). Every scholar who met him admitted the same. Al-Ma'mun gathered once a large number of theologians, jurists and orators and he (al-Rida [a]) surpassed each and every one of them in his own respective branch of knowledge, so much so that the loser admitted his loss and the superiority of the winner over him."[3]

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1 *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, pp. 180-183.

2 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 49, p. 211, as quoted by Ibn Maskawayhi's book *Nadam al-Taraf*.

3 *Ibid.*, Vol. 49, p. 100. It is narrated from al-Hakim by Abu Abdullah, the hafiz of

He is also quoted as saying, "I have heard Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (ع) saying, I used to take my place at the theological center and the number of the learned scholars in Medina was quite large, yet when a question over-taxed the mind of one of those scholars, he and the rest would point at me, and they would send me their queries, and I would answer them all."[1]

After an intellectual discourse with al-Ma'mun, Ali ibn al-Jahm said, "Al-Ma'mun stood up to perform the prayers and took Muhammed ibn Ja'far, who was present there, by the hand, and I followed both of them. He asked him: What do you think of your nephew?' He answered, A learned scholar although we never saw him being tutored by any learned mentor.' Al-Ma'mun said, This nephew of yours is a member of the family of the Prophet (ص) about whom the Prophet (ص) said, The virtuous among my descendants and the elite among my progeny are the most thoughtful when young, the most learned when adult; therefore, do not teach them for they are more learned than you are, nor will they ever take you out of guidance, nor lead you into misguidance.'"[2]

Good manners constitute a significant part of one's personality. The Imam was characterized by a most noble personality which won him the love of the commoners as well as the elite. Ibrahim ibn al-Abbas al-Sali is quoted as saying, "I never saw Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع) angering anyone by something he said, nor did I ever see him interrupting anyone, nor refusing to do someone a favour he was able to do, nor did he ever stretch his legs before an audience, nor leaned upon something while his companion did not, nor did he ever call any of his servants or attendants a bad name, nor did I ever see him spit or burst into laughter; rather, his laughter was just a smile. When he was ready to eat, he seated with him all his attendants, including the doorman and the groom." He added saying, "Do not, therefore, believe anyone who

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Nishapur.

1 *Ibid*.

2 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 1, p. 203.

claims that he saw someone else enjoying such accomplishments."[1] A guest once kept entertaining him part of the night when the lamp started fading and the guest stretched his hand to fix it, but Abul-Hasan (ع) swiftly checked him and fixed it himself, saying, "We are folks who do not let their guests serve them."[2] The author of *Al-Manaqib* states that al-Rida (ع) once went to the public bath-house and someone asked him to give him a massage, so he kept giving the man a massage till someone recognized him and told that person who that dignitary was. The man felt extremely embarrassed; he apologized to the Imam (ع) and gave him a massage.[3] Muhammed ibn al-Fadl narrates the following anecdote regarding the Imam's simple personality. He says:

Al-Rida (ع), on the occasion of Eidul-Fitr, said to one of his attendants, "May Allah accept your good deeds and ours," then he stood up and left. On the occasion of Eidul-Adha, he said to the same man, "May Allah accept our good deeds and yours." I asked him, "O son of the Messenger of Allah! You said something to this man on the occasion of Eidul-Fitr and something else on the occasion of Eidul-Adha; why?" He answered: "I pleaded to Allah to accept his good deeds and ours because his action was similar to mine and I combined it with mine in my plea, whereas I pleaded to Allah to accept our good deeds and his because we are capable of offering the ceremonial sacrifice while he is not; so, our action is different from his."[4]

Imam al-Rida (ع) defines for us the Islamic theory as the rules which govern the actual dealings of man with his brother man. From this can we be inspired that Islam abolishes the then class distinctions among individuals and groups in the areas of public rights and the safeguarding of man's dignity, and that the difference which we must recognize regarding these areas is the one between a person who obeys Allah and another who does not. A man once said to the Imam: "By Allah! There is nobody on the face of earth who is more honourable

1 *Ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 184.

2 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al Kafi*, Vol. 6, p. 203.

3 al-Maghazili, *Al-Manaqib*, Vol. 4, p. 362.

4 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 4, p. 81.

than your forefathers." The Imam responded by saying, "Their piety secured their honour, and their obedience of Allah made them fortunate."[1] Another man said to him: "By Allah! You are the best of all people!" He said to him: "Do not swear that like. Better than me is one who is more obedient to Allah and more pious. By Allah! The following verse was never abrogated: And We have made you nations and tribes so that you may know each other; verily the best of you in Allah's sight is the most pious.'"[2] Abul-Salt once asked him: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! What do you say about something because of which people have been criticizing you?" He asked: "What is it?" He said, "They claim that you call people your slaves." He said, "Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth, You know what is hidden and what is manifest! I invoke Thee to testify that I have never said so, nor did I ever hear that any of my forefathers had said so! Allah! You know the many injustices this nation has committed against us, and this is just one of them..." Then he came to Abul-Salt and said, "O Abdul-Salam! If all people, as some claim, are our slaves, who did we buy them from?" Abul-Salt answered: "You are right, O son of the Messenger of Allah..." Then the Imam said, "O Abdul-Salam! Do you deny the right which Allah has allotted for us to be charged with the authority as others deny?" He said, "God forbid! I do acknowledge such right."[3] Abdullah ibn al-Salt quotes a man from Balkh saying, "I accompanied al-Rida (ع) during his trip to Khurasan. One day he ordered preparations for his meal to which he invited all his attendants, blacks and non-blacks, so I said to him, May my life be sacrificed for yours! Maybe these should have a separate eating arrangement.' He said, Allah Almighty is One; the father (Adam) and the mother (Eve) are the same, and people are rewarded according to their deeds.'"[4] Ibrahim ibn al-Abbas al-Sali is quoted as saying, "I heard Ali ibn Musa al-Rida saying, I swear by emancipation--and whenever I swore by it, I would emancipate one of my slaves till I emancipated each and every one of

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1 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 226.

2 Qur'an, Surat Al-Hujurat:13.

3 *Ibid*., Vol. 2, p. 174.

4 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 4, p. 23.

them--that I do not see myself as better than that (and he pointed to a black slave of his who remained in his service) on account of my kinship to the Messenger of Allah (ع) except if I do a good deed which would render me better.'"[1] Yasir, one of his servants, said once: "Abul-Hasan said to us once: If I leave the table before you do, while you are still eating, do not leave on my account till you are through.' It may happen that he calls upon some of us to his service and he is told that they are eating, whereupon he says: Leave them to finish their meal first.'" Nadir, another servant, says: "Abul-Hasan did not require us to do anything for him except if we had finished eating our meal."[2]

There is no doubt that, generally speaking, the Imams (ع) were more distant than anyone else from the alluring wares of this vanishing world, and most distant from its ornamentations and allurements. But the concept of asceticism according to them was not limited to wearing modest coarse clothes or eating very simple food. Rather, its limits extended beyond that, for the ascetic person is the one who does not allow the pleasures of this world to take control over him without being able to take control of them, one who does not see this world as the ultimate goal he seeks; rather, when it comes towards him, the believer is entitled to enjoy its good things, and when it forsakes him, he contends himself that Allah's rewards are more lasting.

Al-abi is quoted in Nathr al-Durar as saying,

"A group of Sufis visited al-Rida (ع) when he was in Khurasan, and they said to him, 'The commander of the faithful looked into the authority Allah Almighty entrusted to him, and he found you, members of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt (ع), to be the most deserving of all people to be the leaders. Then he discerned you, members of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt (ع), and he found yourself the most worthy of leading the people, so he decided to entrust such leadership to you. The nation is in need of one who wears coarse clothes, eats the most simple food, rides the donkey and visits the sick.' Al-Rida (ع) was first leaning on his

1 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 237.

2 Shaikh al-Mufid *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 6, p. 298.

side, so he sat straight then said, 'Joseph (Yousuf) was a Prophet who used to wear silk mantles brocaded with gold. He sat on the thrones of the Pharaohs and ruled. An Imam is required to be just and fair; when he says something, he says the truth, and when he passes a judgement, he judges equitably, and when he promises something, he fulfills his promise. Allah did not forbid (an Imam) from wearing a particular type of clothes or eating a particular type of food.' Then he recited the Qur'anic verse: 'Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah which He has produced for His servants, and the good things, clean and pure (which He has provided) for sustenance?'"[1]

Imam al-Jawad (ع) was asked once about his view regarding musk. He answered: "My father ordered musk to be made for him in a ben tree in the amount of seven hundred dirhams. Al-Fadl ibn Sahl wrote him saying that people criticized him for that. He worte back: O Fadl! Have you not come to know that Joseph (Yousuf), who was a Prophet, used to wear silk clothes brocaded with gold, and that he used to sit on gilded thrones, and that all of that did not decrease any of his wisdom?' Then he ordered a galia moschata (perfume of musk and ambergris) to be made for him in the amount of four thousand dirhams.'"[2]

Ibn Abbad tells us the following about Imam al-Rida's ascetic conduct: "Al-Rida used to sit on a leaf mat during the summer and on a straw sack during the winter; he used to put on coarse clothes, but when he went out to meet the public, he put on his very best."[3] So, when he is by himself, away from public life, his soul finds harmony with denying what is fake, that is, the decorations and allurements of this life. But when he goes out to meet people, he puts on his best for them following their own nature of holding the appearances of this world as significant, enjoying its good things. This realistically ascetic conduct of the Imam provides us with a glorious example of the truth regarding the Ahl al-Bayt (ع) and their pure view of life which is free from any disturbing fake or pretense.

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1 *Kashf al-Ghumma*, Vol. 3, p. 147; Surat Al A'raf:32.

2 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al Kafi*, Vol. 6, p. 516.

3 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 178.

The Imam (ع) tries to cause others to adorn themselves with the same trait of clemency and tolerance upon being wronged as an element of good relationship among them, justifying this by saying that it increases the dignity of man, for clemency and tolerance, when the ability to deal equal blows and effect equal retribution express the power of anger in man and his control over his rash temper upon being challenged, this causes others to respect and venerate such a person especially when that person shoulders the responsibilities of authority. Al-abi says:

A man sentenced to be beheaded was brought to al-Ma'mun while al-Rida (ع) was among his train. Al-Ma'mun asked him: Father of al-Hasan! What is your view?' He said, All I can say is that Allah only increases the dignity of those whose good will causes them to forgive.' He, therefore, forgave the man.[1]

In a dialogue with al-Bazanti, the Imam said, "Anyone who receives a boon is in danger: He has to carry out Allah's commandments in its regard. By Allah! Whenever Allah blesses me with something, I continue to be in extreme apprehension till (and here he made a motion with his hand) I take out some of it and spend it in the way Allah has ordained in its regard." Al-Bazanti asked him: "May my life be sacrificed for yours! You, in your status of high esteem, fear that much?" He answered: "Yes, indeed! And I praise my Creator for the blessings He bestowed upon me."[2] When in Khurasan, he once distributed his entire wealth to the poor on the day of Arafat, so al-Fadl ibn Sahl said to him: "Now you are bankrupt!" he said, "On the contrary! I am now wealthier than ever. Do not consider trading my wealth for Allah's rewards and pleasure as bankruptcy."[3] He did not give others in order to buy their affection or friendship; rather, he considered giving with generosity as a good trait whereby man gets nearer to his Maker by including His servants in the wealth with which He blessed him. This is the difference between his method of giving

1 *Kashf al-Ghumma*, Vol. 3, p. 143.

2 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al Kafi*, Vol. 3, p. 502.

3 Ibn al-Maghazili, *Al-Manaqib,* Vol. 4, p. 361.

and that of others. Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Nawbakhti is quoted as saying,

A man passed by Abul-Hasan and begged him to give him according to the extent of his kindness. He said, "I cannot afford that." So he said, "Then give me according to mine,'"whereupon he ordered his servant to give the man two hundred dinars. [1]

The reason why the Imam abstained from giving the man according to the extent of his own kindness, as the man asked him the first time, is probably due to the fact that he simply did not have as much money as he liked to give. As regarding his own affection towards the poor and the indigent, and his way of looking after them, Mu'ammar ibn Khallad narrates this anecdote:

Whenever Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع) was about to eat his meal, he would bring a large platter and select the choicest food on the table and put on it, then he would order it to be given away to the poor. After that he would recite the following verse: "But he hath made no haste on the path that is steep."[2] After that he would say, "Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, knows that not everyone has the ability to free a slave; nevertheless, He found means for them to achieve Paradise (by feeding others)."[3]

Thus does the Imam sense the weight of deprivation under which the poor moan and groan; therefore, he shares his best food with them in response to the call of humanity and kindness and in harmony with the spirit of the message with which Allah entrusted him. Al-Bazanti tells the story of a letter Imam al-Rida (ع) once wrote to his son (later Imam) Abu Ja'far (ع) which personifies the generosity and spirit of giving deeply rooted in the hearts of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt (ع); he says: "I read the letter of Abul-Hasan Imam al-Rida (ع) to Abu Ja'far which said, O Abu Ja'far! I have heard that when you ride, the servants take you out of the city through its small gate. This is due to their being

1 *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 360.
2 Al Balad:11.

3 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 264.

miser so that nobody would ask you for something. I plead to you by the right I have upon you that every time you enter into or get out of the city, you should do so through its large gate, and when you ride, take gold and silver with you, and every time you are asked, you should give. If any of your uncles asks you for something, you should give him no less than fifty dinars, and you yourself may determine the maximum amount you would like to give; and if any of your aunts asks you for something, do not give her less than twenty-five dinars, and it is up to you to determine the maximum amount. I only desire that Allah raises your status; therefore, keep giving away and do not fear that the Lord of the Throne will ever throw you into poverty.'"[1] Yasir, one of the Imam's servants, narrates saying that the Imam's attendants were eating some fruit one day and they were throwing away a good portion of it uneaten. Abul-Hasan (ع) said to them: "Praise be to Allah! If you have eaten to your fill, there are many who have not; so, you should feed them of it instead."[2] Sulaiman ibn Ja'far al-Jufi is quoted as saying, "I was in the company of al-Rida (ع) trying to take care of some personal business of my own when I wanted to go home. He said to me, Come with me and spend the night over my house.' So I went with him and he entered his house shortly before sunset. He noticed that his attendants were working with clay, probably mending stables, and there was a black man among them. He asked them, What is this man doing with you?' They said, He is helping us, and we will pay him something.' He asked, Did you come to an agreement with him regarding his wages?' They said, No. He will accept whatever we pay him.' He, thereupon, started whipping them and showing signs of extreme anger. I said to him, May my life be sacrificed for yours! Why are you so angry?' He said, I have forbidden them so many times from doing something like that and ordered them not to employ anyone before coming to an agreement with him regarding his wages. You know that nobody would work for you without an agreed upon wage. If you do not, and then you pay him three times as much as you first intended to pay him, he would still think that you underpaid him. But if you agree on the wage, he will praise you for fulfilling your promise and for paying him according to your agreement, and then if you give

1 *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 8.

2 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 6, p. 297.

him a little bit more, he would recognize it and notice that you increased his pay."[1] Al-Bazanti is quoted as saying,

Al-Rida (ع) had one of his donkeys sent to convey me to his residence, so I came to the town and stayed with a dignitary for a part of the night, and we both had our supper together, then he ordered my bed to be prepared. A Tiberian pillow, a Caesarian sheet, and a Merv blanket were brought to me. Having eaten my supper, he asked me, "Would you like to retire?"' I said, "Yes, may my life be sacrificed for yours." So he put the sheet and the blanket over me and said, "May Allah make you sleep in good health," and we were on the rooftop. When he went down, I told myself that I had achieved a status with that man nobody else had attained before. It was then when I heard someone calling my name, but I did not recognize the voice till one of his (al-Rida's) servants came to me. He said, "Come meet my master;" so I went down and he came towards me, asked me for my hand to shake and he shook it with a squeeze, saying, "The Commander of the Faithful, Allah's peace be with him, came once to visit Sasaah ibn Sawhan, and when it was time to leave, he advised Sa'sa'ah not to boast about his visit to him but to look after himself instead for he seemed to be about to depart from this world and that worldly hopes do not do a dying man any good, and he greeted him a great deal as he bid him good-bye."[2]

We can clearly be acquainted with the negative stance of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) towards their rulers by examining what al-Hasan ibn al-Husain al-Anbari tells us about Imam Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع). Says he, "I continued writing him for fourteen years asking his permission that I accept a job in the service of the sultan. At the conclusion of the last letter which I wrote him, I stated the fact that I was fearing for my life because the sultan was accusing me of being a Rafidi and that he did not doubt that the reason why I declined from working for him was due to my being a Rafidi. So Abul-Hasan wrote me saying, I have comprehended the contents of your letters and what you stated

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1 *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 288.

2 *Qurb al-Isnad*, p. 222, and *Al-Kharaij wal Jaraih*, p. 237, with a slight textual variation.

regarding your life being in jeopardy. If you know that should you accept the job, you would behave according to the commands of the Messenger of Allah (ع) and your assistants and clerks would be followers of your faith, and if you use the gain you receive to help needy believers till you become their equal, then one deed will offset another; otherwise, do not.'"[1].

The author of Al-Ghaiba quotes al-Hassan ibn al-Hassan saying, "I said to Abul-Hasan Musa (ع) once, Can I ask you a question?' He answered, You must rather ask your own Imam.' I inquired, What do you mean? I do not know of any Imam other than your own self.' He said, He is my son Ali to whom I gave my title (of Imam).' I said, Master! Please help me save myself from Hellfire! Abu Abdullah (ع) had said that you yourself are the Qa'im, the caretaker of this issue.' He said, Was I not?' Then he added, O Hassan! No Imam preaches to a nation except when he is their Qa'im; so, when he leaves them (i.e. dies), his successor will be the Qa'im and the Hujja (Proof) till he too leaves. We (the Imams) are all Qa'ims; therefore, from now on, redirect all your dealings to my son Ali, for by Allah do I swear twice that I did not do that on my own accord but Allah did out of His love for him.'"[2]

The Imam did his best to emphasize the error of that concept and how it collided with the reality by continuously stating that the Imamate after his demise would be the responsibility of his son Ali, and he even made a number of his followers and family testify to it. For example, Haider ibn Ayyub says, "We were in Medina at Quba, where we used to meet Muhammed ibn Zaid ibn Ali. He (the latter) came to us one day much later than anticipated, so we asked him what caused him to be so late. He said, Abu Ibrahim (Imam al-Rida [a]) invited seventeen of our men, all descendants of Ali and Fatima, Allah's blessings be upon both of them, and he required us to bear witness to his will and testimony that his son Ali would be his successor and representative during the remainder of his own life and after his demise.' Then Muhammed ibn Zaid said, By Allah, O Haider! He has today tied the knot of Imamate for him, and the Shi'as will accept him as the Imam after his father's demise.'"[3] Abdullah ibn al-Harith said, "Abu Ibrahim called us to his presence and we responded. He said, Do you know why I have

1 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi,* Vol. 5, p. 111.

2 Shaikh at-Tusi, *Al-Ghaiba*, p. 29.

gathered you all here?' We answered in the negative. He said, Bear witness that this Ali, my son, is my regent, the executor of my will, and my successor after me; whoever entrusted me with anything, let him take it back from him, and whoever insisted on seeking audience with me, let him obtain his written approval first.'"[1] Abdul-Rahman ibn al-Hajjaj is quoted as saying that Abul-Hasan Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) had nominated his son Ali for the Imamate and wrote a statement to this effect in the presence of sixty witnesses from among the most distinguished dignitaries of Medina.[2]

There are many narratives narrated by some advocates and inventors of Waqfism which clearly prove to us their false claims. For example, Ziyad ibn Marwan al-Qandi narrates the following:

Once I visited Abu Ibrahim, and his son Ali was with him. He said to me, "O Ziyad! His statements (referring to his son) are as good as mine, his speech is like my speech, and his instructions are as binding as mine."[3]

Ahmed ibn Muhammed al-Maithami, a Waqfi, says, "Muhammed ibn Isma'eel ibn al-Fadl al-Hashimi told me the following: I visited Abul-Hasan Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) when he was suffering from an acute illness. I asked him: If the matter regarding which I pray Allah that it would not happen (Imam's death) comes to pass, who shall we follow?' He said, My son Ali; his writing is as though I wrote it, and he is my regent and successor after me.'"[4]

Ghannam ibn al-Qasim is quoted as saying, "Mansur ibn Younus Barzaj told me that he had visited Abul-Hasan, that is, Musa ibn Ja'far (ع), and he said to him, Have you come to know what new undertaking I have undertaken today?' He answered in the negative, so the Imam

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3 'al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 1, p. 28.

1 *Ibid*., p. 27.

2 *Ibid*., p. 28.

3 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 381; also al-Mufid's *Al-Irshad*, p. 286.

4 'Shaikh al-Mufid, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 1, p. 20.

said, I have appointed my son Ali as my regent and successor after me; so, entered the room and congratulate him and tell him that I ordered you to do so.' He, therefore, entered Ali's room and congratulated him and informed him that his father had ordered him to do so, but al-Mansur reneged after that, and he even confiscated the funds (of Muslims) entrusted to him."[1]

There is another stance for the Imam which is not without an exciting moment involving one of the main advocates of Waqfism. His stance was like a clear warning to those who created the controversy of this "sect" and promoted it; al-Bata'ini states the following:

I said to Abul-Hasan, "Your father had informed us of his successor, and we wish you could inform us of yours." So he took my hand and shook it, then he recited the verse: "Allah will not mislead people after He had guided them, in order that He may make clear to them what to fear (and avoid)."[2]

The recitation of that verse came almost like a prophecy about the future of what that person and his friends would do and how they would fall into the slippery paths of misguidance; therefore, he shook his hand and recited a verse which predicted that those folks' deviation would take place after proof had been made manifest against them. The Imam, as a matter of fact, referred clearly to the Waqfi movement after him and even recited the epitaph of the faith of those who advocated Waqfism in a narrative transmitted by Muhammed ibn Sinan who says,

I visited Abul-Hasan one year before he was transported to Iraq, and his son was with him. He called upon me to be attentive, and I responded. Then he said, "There will be a movement this year..., but do not let it bother you." Then he lowered his head contemplating, picking the ground. Then he raised his head and recited this verse: "Allah leads the oppressors astray and does whatever He pleases."[3] I said, "And what is that, may my life be sacrificed for yours?" He said, "Anyone who

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1 al-Kashi's *Rijal*, p. 398.

2 al-'Ayyashi, *Tafsir*, Vol. 2, p. 115 where verse 115 of Surat al Tawba is discussed.

3 Qur'an, Surat Ibrahim:27.

denies the right of this son of mine and refuses to recognize his Imamate after me will be equal to one who denied the right of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) and did not recognize his Imamate after Muhammed (ص)." So I understood that he was implying that his death was near, and that he was appointing his son as his successor.[1]

The Imam (ع) was briefly contemporary to ar-Rashid 's regime during which he suffered the tragedy of the assassination of his father Imam Musa al-Kazim (ع) and other Alawides. After the murder of his father, he was not safe from the schemes of some of those who flattered the rulers, followed their course, and pretended to show their loyalty by instigating enmity against the regime's opponents, encouraging their elimination, thinking that that would increase the rulers' liking for them and nearness to them, that it would strengthen their position, grant them unique distinctions, and raise them to the highest pinnacles.

Ja'far ibn Yahya says, "I heard asa ibn Ja'far say to Harun (ar-Rashid) upon leaving al-Riqqa for Mecca, Remember your oath by the dignity of the descendants of Abu Talib that: should anyone after Musa (al-Kazim [a]) claim to be the Imam, you would strike his head with the sword. This Ali, his son, claims so, and people are addressing him in the same way they used to address his father.' He looked at him angrily and said, Why? Do you expect me to eliminate each and every one of them?'" Musa ibn Mahran says that when he heard Ja'far ibn Yahya say so, he went to him (i.e. to Imam al-Rida) and told him what he had heard. Al-Rida (ع) responded by saying, "What do I have to do with them? By Allah, they cannot hurt me in the least."

Such instigation was not confined within a reasonable limit but went beyond it to where instigation might cause ar-Rashid to pay serious attention, for the Barmakis were most antagonistic towards the Descendants of the Prophet (ص) and the most cruel among them in their grudge, so much so that it is reported that Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki was the one who ordered Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) to be murdered[2] when the Abbaside caliphate was under their mercy.[1] Imam al-Rida (ع) rendered Allah's retribution against the Barmakis to their

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1 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 1, p. 32.

persecution and oppression the worst of which was suffered by Imam al-Kazim (ع).[2] Suffices for proof is the fact that Yahya ibn Khalid was the one who plotted the ugly plot against Imam al-Kazim (ع) after causing Harun ar-Rashid to be angry with him, instigating ar-Rashid against the Imam (ع) and using some simpleton weaklings among the Alawides to achieve his goal.[3]

Finally, ar-Rashid is surrounded by a large number of courtiers instigating him to kill Imam al-Rida (ع), and they succeeded in stirring his feelings against the Imam (ع). Abul-Salt al-Harawi narrates saying that one day he was sitting with the Imam (ع) at his house when a messenger from Harun ar-Rashid came in and ordered the Imam (ع) to present himself before the caliph. The Imam (ع) said, "O Abul-Salt! He does not call upon me at such time of the night except for trouble. By Allah! He cannot do anything which I hate to me because of what I had come to know of certain statements said by my grandfather the Messenger of Allah (ع)." Abul-Salt continues his narrative to say that he accompanied the Imam (ع) as he entered Harun ar-Rashid 's court. When the latter looked at him, al-Rida (ع) recited a certain supplication by the Prophet (ص). When the Imam (ع) stood before ar-Rashid , the latter looked carefully at him and then said, "O Abul-Hasan! We have ordered a hundred thousand dirhams for you; write down of all your family's needs." When the Imam (ع) left the court, the caliph kept looking at him as he was leaving and said behind his back: "I wished something, and Allah wished otherwise, and what Allah wished was good." Thus did Allah save the life of the Imam (ع) who sought refuge with Him, seeking His assistance through the sincere words which he had come to know that his grandfather the Messenger of Allah (ع) had articulated. Ar-Rashid , on the other hand, went back to himself satisfied after destiny had opposed his vicious intention just to realize

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2 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 226.

1 *'Umdat al-Talib*, p. 185, 1st edition (Najaf, Iraq).

2 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 48, p. 249.

3 Shaikh at-Tusi, *Al-Ghaiba*, p. 22.

that what Allah had done was, indeed, better than what he himself had intended to do.
Safwan ibn Yahya is quoted as saying, “When Abul-Hasan Musa (ع) passed away and al-Rida (ع) started preaching his mission, we were worried about his life (al-Rida’s) and we said to him, You have declared something of great magnanimity, and we worry about your safety because of this tyrant.’ He said, Let him try his best, for he shall not have the means to hurt me.’”[4] Muhammed ibn Sinan said, “During Harun’s reign, I said to Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع), You have made yourself well-known because of this matter and followed in the footsteps of your father while Haroun’s sword is dripping with blood.’ He said, What made me bold in this regard is that the Messenger of Allah (ع) had said, If Abu Jahl harms even one hair on my head, then bear witness that I am not a Prophet at all,’ and I tell you that if Harun took one hair away from my head, then bear witness that I am not an Imam at all.’”[5]

Some Waqfis tried to warn him against declaring himself as the Imam (ع) and openly acting as such, and he told them that such a matter did not require a warning, and that the fear that Harun might hurt him was groundless. Those individuals had only one objective in mind: to discourage al-Rida (ع) from making his Imamate public so that they might be able to promote their “sect” which claimed that the Qa’im was Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) and that he was still alive as we mentioned above. Let us review the dialogue between the Imam (ع) and some of those Waqfis. Abu Masrooq has stated the following:

"A group of Waqfis entered the house of the Imam (ع) once and among them were men like Abu Hamzah al-Bata’ini, Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Ammar, al-Husain ibn Umran, and al-Husain ibn Abu Sa'd al-Makari. Ali ibn Abu Hamzah said to him, “May my life be sacrificed for you! Tell us how your father is doing.” He said, “He, peace be with him, passed away.” He said, “Who did he recommend to succeed him?” He answered, “Myself.” He said, “You are claiming something which none

4 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 487. It is also mentioned in al-Saduq’s book *‘Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, in *Al-Manaqib*, and in *Al-Irshad.*

5 *Rawdat al-Kafi*, p. 257.

among your forefathers claimed, starting from Ali ibn Abu Talib downwards." He said, "It was said by the best of my forefathers and the most distinguished among them: the Messenger of Allah (ع)." He asked, "Do not you fear for your safety?" He said, "Had I worried about my safety, I would have been in a position to do something to protect myself. The Messenger of Allah (ع) was approached once by Abu Lahab who threatened him; the Messenger of Allah (ع) said to him: If I am scratched by you even slightly, then I am, indeed, a liar.' That was the first time the Messenger of Allah (ع) instigated someone, and this is the first time I do likewise and tell you that if I am scratched by Harun even slightly, then I am, indeed, a liar." Husain ibnMahran said to him, "If this comes to pass, then we will have achieved our objective." He said, "What do you exactly want? Should I go to Harun and tell him that I am the Imam (ع) and that he is nobody? This is not how the Messenger of Allah behaved at the onset of his mission; rather, he said so to his family and followers and those whom he trusted from among the public. You believe that Imamate belongs to my father, claiming that what stops me from admitting that my father is alive is my own fear. I do not fear you when I say to you that I am the Imam; so, how can I fear you if my father is, indeed, alive?"[1]

The Imam's expectation proved to be true; Ar-Rashid breathed his last without hurting the Imam (ع) in the least.

As regarding the Imam's life during al-Amin's reign, we cannot recount any incident regarding the government's stance towards Imam al-Rida (ع), and this may be attributed to the confusing environment in which the Abbaside caliphate found itself due to internal dissents which led in the end to a serious split among the members of the ruling dynasty. Such split which was caused by al-Amin who deposed his brother al-Ma'mun from the post of heir to the throne and the nomination of his son, Musa, in his place after listening to the advice of al-Fadl ibn al-Rabi'' who had a personal vendetta against al-Ma'mun and who feared him for his post should he become the caliph instead, since he had already opposed him openly.[2]

1 Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, *Ayan al-Shi'a*, Vol. 4, Part I, p. 138.

2 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil* Vol. 5, p. 138.

There is disagreement regarding caliph al-Amin's school of thought. Some think that he was Shi'a, while others think that he only pretended to be so out of his concern for Imam al-Rida's feelings and for those of other Alawides while in reality he was otherwise. But his discourses, debates, and his serious method whereby he challenged what was regarded as accepted facts by those who opposed his views dispel any doubts regarding his acceptance of Shi'aism. Moreover, there are certain noteworthy measures which he undertook supporting this view such as his belief that the Holy Qur'an was the Word of Allah created by Him, and his insistence that scholars and faqihs should indicate and promote this view, so much so that he stirred quite a reaction among contemporary Islamic circles to the extent that it was referred to as "the Holy Qur'an's ordeal." His father, ar-Rashid , differed from him in this regard. When he heard that Bishr al-Marisi endorsed the concept that the Holy Qur'an was created by Allah, he said, "If I ever lay my hand on him, I shall strike his neck with the sword."[1] Also, he believed in the temporary marriage of mut'a, and he refuted the views of the second caliph in this regard with arguments which have already been recorded by leading historians.

Add to all this his preference of Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) over all other companions of the Prophet (ص) and his view that Ali was more worthy of succeeding the Messenger of Allah (ع) as the caliph. Yet another supporting argument is his serious attempt to make the cursing of Mu'awiyah a tradition and enforce it on his subjects; he announced to people once the following:

There shall be no pardon for anyone guilty of praising Mu'awiyah, and the best of creation after the Prophet (ص) is Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).[2]

That was in response to Mu'awiyah who made the cursing of Ali a

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1 al-Sayyati, *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, p. 284.

2 *Ibid*., p. 308.

tradition which continued throughout the reign of all Umayyad rulers till the days of caliph Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz who put an end to it in order to safeguard the government of the Umayyads against the disgust people felt towards such ignominous tradition. He sympathized with the Alawides, and returned Fedak to them.

Al-Ma'mun, in fact, sincerely felt guilty about the crimes committed by his predecessors against the Alawides as a letter he wrote to some Hashemites testified as stated above wherein he said, "The Umayyads killed anyone (among the Alawides) who unsheathed a sword, while we, the Abbasides, have been killing them en masse; so, ask the great souls of the Hashemites what sin they committed, and ask those who were buried in Baghdad and Kufa alive..."[1]

Al-Ma'mun's inclination towards Shaism is the result of many factors of a permanent impact upon his way of thinking, starting with his childhood when a Shi'a educator planted deeply in his soul the allegiance to Ali and the family of Ali (ع), and ending with his residence in parts of Khurasan where mostly Shi'as lived. Al-Ma'mun himself narrated an anecdote with a moral which taught him to sympathize with Shi'as. It involved an encounter with his father ar-Rashid who was very well known for his cruelty, tyranny, arrogance and hatred of the Alawides, especially Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) whom he poisoned. Al-Ma'mun states that when Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) met ar-Rashid at Medina, ar-Rashid showed a great deal of humbleness before him and a great deal of respect to a degree which attracted his own attention; so, he continues to say, "When there was nobody else present, I said, O commander of the faithful! Who is this man whom you have held with such high esteem, respected a great deal, stood up to receive, and even seated in the most prominent place while seating yourself in front of him, and you even ordered us to hold the rein of his horse?!' He said, This is the Imam of the people, the Proof of Allah's Mercy to His creation (Hujjatullah) and His caliph among His servants.' I asked, O commander of the faithful! Are not all these attributes yours and fulfilled in your person?' He replied, I am the

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1 Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 49, p. 210 as quoted in Ibn Maskawayhi's book *Nadam al-Farid*.

Imam of the masses by force and through oppression, while Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) is the Imam in truth. By Allah, son, he is more worthy of being the successor of the Messenger of Allah (ع) as the caliph than I am and anyone else among the people! By Allah! If you yourself attempt to take such caliphate from me, I shall take it away from you even if that means gouging your eyes, for power is blind!'"[1]

Harun ar-Rashid was still not satisfied till he divided the domains of the state into three sections, granting al-Amin authority over Iraq and Syria up to the end of his western possessions; to al-Ma'mun he gave the territories from Hamadan up to the eastern borders of his domains; to al-Qasim he gave the peninsula, the sea ports, and the metropolises after having secured the oath of allegiance for him after his brother al-Ma'mun and giving him the option to keep or depose al-Ma'mun.[2] Thus, ar-Rashid thought, the ghost of dissension would be averted, and the government after his death would be secured for all his sons since he gave each one of them a portion thereof whereby he would maintain a force strong enough to deter the aggression of the other.

People predicted ominous consequences because of what ar-Rashid had done. Some of them said that he sowed the seeds of evil and war among his sons.[3] Some wise men said that he caused them to fall into an inner conflict the perils of which victimized the subjects.[4] The conflict among the two brothers was worsened by the instigation of some top rank politicians in each party. On one hand, we find al-Fadl ibn al-Rabi'', who caused the army to renege on its sworn promise of support for al-Ma'mun in Khurasan as soon as ar-Rashid died, marched to Baghdad in order to strengthen al-Amin's position, trying to aggravate the tension between al-Amin and his brother al-Ma'mun, instigating the first to nullify the allegiance to al-Ma'mun and change it to his son Musa, depending in so doing on various means of instigation which in the end pushed al-Amin to attack his brother. Al-Fadl, by

1 al-Saduq, *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

2 *Ibid*., p. 112.

3 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 5, p. 113.

4 al-Sayyati, *Tarikh al-Khulafa*, p. 290.

doing so, was trying to get rid of al-Ma'mun as the regent for fear that should he come to rule, he would certainly seek revenge against him due to his going back on his promise to support al-Ma'mun whom he slighted and the oath of allegiance to whom he violated.[1]

Al-Irshad narrates that al-Ma'mun discussed the subject of regency with al-Rida (ع), saying, "I have decided that you should be my successor." The Imam said, "Exempt me from that, O commander of the faithful, for I have neither the ability nor the strength for that." He said, "I have decided that you should be my successor." The Imam said, "Exempt me from that, O commander of the faithful." Al-Ma'mun responded with a statement which was more of a threat than anything else; he said to him: "Omer ibn al-Khattab entrusted six persons to consult regarding the caliphate; one of them was your grandfather, Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), and he preconditioned that anyone who went against their decision should be executed; therefore, you will have to accept what I have decreed for you, for I see no way that I can ever change my mind."[2]

The Imam (ع), therefore, had to agree.[3] It is also narrated that a lengthy discussion went on between both men in which al-Ma'mun offered the Imam to be the caliph and the Imam refused to accept, then he offered him the regency and he again refused, so al-Ma'mun said to him, "You always say what I hate to hear, and you think that you are safe from my might; therefore, I swear by Allah that you should either accept the regency willingly or I shall force you to do so; therefore, accept out of your own will; otherwise, I shall certainly strike your neck with the sword."[4]

What proves the fact that al-Ma'mun was not serious in his offer to the Imam to be the regent is a narration stating that al-Fadl al-Nawbakhti,

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1 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 5, p. 138.

2 al-Mufid, *Kitab al-Irshad*, p. 290. Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 375.

3 al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 375.

4 al-Saduq, *Ilal al-Shara'i*, p. 266.

who was an astronomer believed to be a Shi'a, wanted to test al-Ma'mun's intentions, so he wrote him saying, "The order of the stars indicates that naming al-Rida (ع) as the regent at this time cannot be done; otherwise, the person named will suffer a catastrophe. Therefore, if al-Ma'mun's intentions agree with what he proclaims in public, he ought to postpone this matter till a more opportune time." To this, al-Ma'mun warned him against discouraging Thul-Riyasatayn from contracting that agreement at that time, and that if he did not, he would know that the postponement was instigated by al-Nawbakhti. He also ordered him to return his own letter back to him so that nobody else would come to find out about it. He then came to know that al-Fadl was aware of the fact that time was not ripe for contracting the regency because he himself had knowledge of the science of the stars; therefore, al-Nawbakhti feared that the change of mind of al-Fadl ibn Sahl was because of him personally, and he would thus be killed by al-Ma'mun, so he rode to him and convinced him through his own knowledge of astronomy that time was indeed ripe for it, contrary to the reality, because he was more knowledgeable than him in astrology, and he kept confusing him till he finally convinced him.[1]

Having failed to convince the Imam that he would abdicate the throne for him, al-Ma'mun requested him to accept to be the regent and to name him the succeeding caliph after him, but the Imam again insisted on refusing, so much so that al-Ma'mun had to seek the assistance of some of his best aides despite the fact that they themselves were not convinced that it was such a good idea, thinking that al-Ma'mun was serious. In his book titled Kitab Al-Irshad, Shaikh al-Mufid states the

1 al-Saduq,*Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, P. 148.

following:

"A group of historians and court biographers who were contemporary to the [Abbaside] caliphs say that when al-Ma'mun wanted to name Ali ibn Musa (ع) as his successor, and having thought seriously about the matter, he ordered al-Fadl ibn Sahl to come to him and he informed him of his intention, ordering him to seek the assistance of his brother al-Hasan ibn Sahl[1] in this regard, and he did just that. So they met with him, and al-Hasan kept pointing out the magnanimity of the consequences of his suggestion, acquainting him with the outcomes resulting from taking his family out of it and affecting his own life. Al-Ma'mun, thereupon, said to him: "I pledged to Allah that if I lay my hand on the person who deposed me, I would hand the caliphate over to the best person among the progeny of Abu Talib, and I do not know anyone better than this man on the face of earth." So, when both al-Fadl and al-Hasan saw his determination to carry out this matter, they stopped opposing him and he sent them to al-Rida (ع). They offered him the position, but he refused to accept it, and they continued pressing him till he finally agreed, so they went back to al-Ma'mun and told him about his approval whereupon he was very pleased."[2]

Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani stated something similar to the above with this variation: "He dispatched them to Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (ع) and they offered it to him, and they continued pressing him while he was refusing till one of them said to him, If you agree, let it be so, but if you do not, we shall surely harm you,' and he threatened to kill him. Then one of them said, By Allah he ordered me to strike your neck with my

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1 It appears that al-Hasan ibn Sahl was al-Ma'mun's ruler over Iraq at that time, and we cannot explain why the name of al-Hasan is mentioned in this story except in the case al-Ma'mun had called him to meet with him to consult regarding the issue of selecting Imam al-Rida (ع) as the regent as presumes Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin in his encyclopedic work titled *A'yan al-Shi'a*. But al-Fadl's letter to his brother al-Hasan regarding regency, as Ibn al-Atheer and at-Tabari and other historians indicate, negates all that, and the addition may have been the action of the narrator who was ignorant of all of that, thus causing a major problem afflicting narratives.

2 al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*, p. 291.

sword if you go against his wish.'"[1]

Imam al-Rida (ع) knew beforehand about al-Ma'mun's intentions through his knowledgeable foresight of the circumstances which led al-Ma'mun to vest the regency upon him, and he was contented that he would not actually accede to the throne in the future. Al-Madaini quotes one of his sources saying, "When al-Rida (ع) was seated during the regency celebration, with the orators and poets surrounding him and the flags fanning him, one individual who was present there and then said, I was close to him that day, and he looked at me and noticed my optimistic smile regarding the event, so he beckoned for me to come close. When I did, he said the following to me while nobody except me could hear him: Do not let this excite you, and do not be overly optimistic, for it will never materialize.'"[2]

Al-Ma'mun was not satisfied with all of that; he went ahead and subjected the Imam (ع) to a strict surveillance whereby he was closely watching all his movements, and he indirectly restricted his contacts with others; al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt narrates the following:

"Hisham ibn Ibrahim ar-Rashid i was the closest person to al-Rida (ع) before he was taken to the caliph's palace, and he was a courteous and brilliant scholar. Al-Rida's contacts used to be transacted through him and under his supervision, and he used to collect all monies on his behalf before he, Abul-Hasan, was taken away. When he was taken away to the palace, Hisham ibn Ibrahim contacted Thul-Riyasatayn and he tried his best to win his favour and started informing him and al-Ma'mun about al-Rida's movements, thus he won their confidence and did not conceal anything regarding the Imam (ع) from them. Al-Ma'mun, therefore, appointed him as the Imam's chamberlain, and nobody could have audience with the Imam (ع) except those whom he liked, and he enforced a tight surveillance on the Imam (ع), so much so that none of his supporters could reach him without Hisham's approval, and he used to inform al-Ma'mun and Thul-Riyasatayn of anything and

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1 al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 375.

2 al-Mufid, *Kitab Al-Irshad*, p. 291.

everything al-Rida (ع) said at home."[1]

What prompted al-Ma'mun to take such a harsh measure was his great apprehension that the Alawides, who predominated Khurasan, encouraged and directed by the Imam (ع), might move topple his government.

Having evaluated the general status of the political policies of his government, which were surrounded by tumultuous events starting with Baghdad going back against its promise of support to him and passing by the Shi'a Alawide throngs surrounding his base of government in Khurasan and ending with the Alawide rebellions in Iraq, Hijaz and Yemen, al-Ma'mun thought of curing this weak point by a brilliantly acceptable political move which would be something to divert the attention of the Alawides and the Shi'a residents of Khurasan and, at the same time, constituting a terrible threat to the Abbaside masses in Baghdad. All such measures, he hoped, would strengthen his influence and help him control all parties involved. This could not be accomplished without naming Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (ع) as the successor to the throne. And so it happened; the caliph sent letters to the Imam (ع) ordering him to go to Merv. The Imam (ع) refused, and a great deal of correspondence ensured between both men till al-Ma'mun finally convinced him to go there, sending a special force to escort him which included al-Dhahhak, or, according to al-Mufid and Abul Faraj al-Isfahani, al-Jalladi. History books do not say much about that trip except small bits and pieces which do not provide us with a clear vision of its nature and mission.

Al-Ma'mun had already ordered his messenger to take a group of dignitaries who were descendants of Abu Talib to the Basra highway, then to al-Ahwaz and Persia, keeping in mind that the alternate route, which was Kufa-al-Jabal-Kerman Shah-Qum, was mostly inhabited by Shi'as and it has their strongholds, and they might be carried away by their enthusiasm upon finding out that the Imam (ع) was among them and might decide to keep him there and thus involve the government in dangerous consequences which might cause its weakening and

1 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 153.

collapse.

When he entered Nishapur[1], he stayed at a neighbourhood called al-Qazwani where there were crowds of pigeons, the pigeons which they call today al-Rida (ع) pigeons, and there was a spring there the water of which had receded, so he hired workers who repaired it till its water became plentiful. He had a pool built on its outside where stairs were also built according to his instructions leading to the low level of the spring water, so the Imam (ع) went down, made his ablution, came out and said his prayers on the outside.

The Imam (ع) continued his trip till he finally reached Merv where al-Ma'mun had prepared a comfortable place for him, surrounding him with respect and. It was then that al-Ma'mun started to execute the plan which he had plotted for the regency.

Having been convinced to accept, the Imam (ع) said to al-Ma'mun: "I also agree not to name anyone in a post nor remove anyone from a post, that I do not cancel any decree or custom, and to remain as an advisor." The caliph agreed.[2]

In another encounter, al-Ma'mun tried to press the Imam (ع) into participating in the state affairs. Mu'ammar ibn Khallad said that Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع) had said to him, "Al-Ma'mun said to me, O father of al-Hasan! You may suggest the names of some individuals whom you trust to be governors of the areas where corruption is manifest,' and I said to him, If you honour your part of the agreement, I shall certainly honour mine. I agreed to what I agreed on the condition that I do not issue orders nor overrule others, nor depose anyone nor appoint anyone, nor do I go anywhere except wherever Allah sends me. By Allah! Caliphate is something which I never desired, and I used to live in Medina where I would go traverse its alleys on the back of my animal, and when its residents or others asked me to do them a favour, I

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1 Founded in the third century A.D. by king Shapur I, Nishapur was a major cultural center under the Seljuks. It is the town where Omer al-Khayyam was born and buried.

2 al-Saduq, *Ilal al-Shara'i*, Vol. 1, p. 226.

would do them a favour, and thus they become like my own uncles. My letters still carry weight in various lands, and you have not increased me in the least in whatever blessing Allah has bestowed upon me.' So he said, I shall honour it.'"[1]

One of the manifestations of the inaugural regency ceremony was the Eid prayers which al-Ma'mun insisted that the Imam (ع) should conduct in person because he himself had caught a very bad cold, or he may have had another excuse. Al-Irshad quotes Ali ibn Ibrahim who, in turn, quotes Yasir the servant and al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt saying that when the Eid approached, and al-Rida (ع) had already been named as the caliph's successor, al-Ma'mun invited him to ride to the place where the occasion was to be celebrated and to lead the congregational prayers and deliver the sermon. Al-Rida (ع) sent him word saying, "You know what terms exist between both of us; so, please exempt me from conducting the prayers to people." Al-Ma'mun answered saying, "My intention is that people's hearts must rest at peace regarding you and they should come to know your excellences." Messengers kept going between both men carrying messages, and when al-Ma'mun insisted on his suggestion, he sent him a message saying, "If you exempt me, I would appreciate it, and if you do not, I shall come out just as the Messenger of Allah (ع) and the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) did," whereupon al-Ma'mun said, "Come out however you please." He ordered the commanders of the army and the chamberlains as well as the public at large to go early to al-Rida's house. People waited in the alleys and on rooftops to see Abul-Hasan al-Rida (ع), and women and children waited for him, too. The army commanders and their attending troops stood guard at his door mounted on their horses till the sun started rising. Abul-Hasan washed, put on his outdoor clothes. He wore a cotton turban, leaving a tassel of it drape down on his chest and between his shoulders. He rubbed his hands with some perfume, took a cane and told his servants to do likewise. So they all came out, and he was barefoot. He raised his trousers up to half the leg, and his clothes were hanging loosely on him. He walked for a short while, raised his head above and made the takbar and his servants did likewise. Then he walked till he reached his doorstep. When the leaders

1 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 167.

and their troops saw him looking like that, they all swiftly alighted, so much so that lucky was whoever happened to have a knife to cut the leather stirrups so that he could jump faster than the rest, take his sandals off and remain barefoot just as the Imam (ع) had done. Al-Rida (ع) made takbar again, and everyone else did likewise; it seemed as if the sky and the walls echoed with him, and Merv was shaken with the noise of weeping and hassle when its residents saw Abul-Hasan and heard him say *Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!...*

Al-Ma'mun came to know about all of that. Al-Fadl ibn Sahl Thul-Riyasatayn said to him, “O Commander of the faithful! If al-Rida (ع) reaches the mosque in such a condition, people will be fascinated by him and we all will have to fear for our lives; so, send him a messenger and tell him to return.” Al-Ma'mun sent him a message saying, “We have over-burdened you and wore you out, and we do not wish that you should suffer any hardship on our account; so, go back home, and let people say their prayers behind whoever they have been praying.” Abul-Hasan, therefore, asked for his sandals back, put them on and went back. People on that day differed regarding their prayers, and he did not congregate with them.

Al-Ma'mun’s reign was plagued with dissensions and discords both at home and abroad, and part of the problem was the influence the caliph had awarded to his prime minister al-Fadl ibn Sahl. The latter did many things on his own, letting the caliph know what he wanted him to know. Many dignitaries, including top ranking government officials and commanders of the army, were not happy about such an influence. They were sincere in their intentions to save the deteriorating situation by requesting Imam al-Rida (ع) to disclose the reality of the status quo to al-Ma'mun, since he was the only one who could not be harmed by al-Fadl nor could anyone instigate al-Ma'mun against him. Ibn Khaldun writes the following:

"As discords took place in Iraq because of al-Hasan ibn Sahl (brother of al-Fadl), and due to people’s resentment of his and his brother’s excessive influence over al-Ma'mun, then [their outrage at] the nomination of Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (ع) and the possibility of the caliphate slipping away from the Abbasides’ hands, al-Fadl ibn Sahl

was meanwhile concealing all of that from al-Ma'mun. He was going to extremes in such concealment for fear al-Ma'mun might change his heart about him and about his brother. When Harthamah came, he knew that he was going to tell al-Ma'mun about all of that, and that al-Ma'mun trusted the advice of Harthamah; so, he perfected his instigation against him with al-Ma'mun till he made him change his mind about the man and kill him, and he did not even listen to what he wanted to say; therefore, the displeasure of the Shi'as there, as well as that of the residents of Baghdad, intensified against him, and dissensions became widespread. The commanders of al-Ma'mun's army started talking about it, but they could not inform him of it, so they approached Ali al-Rida (ع) and asked him to convey the matter to al-Ma'mun. And so it was. He informed him of the rioting and killing in Iraq and that people criticized him for the favourite status which he had granted both al-Fadl and al-Hasan, and for his (al-Rida's) nomination. Al-Ma'mun asked him, "Who else besides you knows all of that?" He said, "Yahya ibn Maad, Abdul-Aziz ibn Imran and other prominent army leaders." So he called them to him, and they did not reveal anything except after he had offered them sworn guarantees of their own security, so they told him exactly what al-Rida (ع) had already told him."[1]

At-Tabari provides us with a clear and more precise picture of Imam al-Rida's situation; he writes the following in his famous history book:

"It was rumoured that Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammed [al-Rida], the Alawide, told al-Ma'mun about the dissension and inter-killing among people, that since the assassination of his brother, al-Fadl was concealing the news from him, that his own family and the public criticized him for certain reasons and said he was a bewildered madman, and that since they saw that he was doing all of that, they swore the oath of allegiance to his uncle Ibrahim ibn al-Mahdi as the caliph. Al-Ma'mun said, "They did not swear the oath of allegiance to him; rather, they accepted him as a governor ruling them in the way al-Fadl had instructed him." He informed him that al-Fadl had indeed lied to him and that he cheated him as well, adding, "The war between

1 Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddima,* Vol. 3, p. 249.

Ibrahim and al-Hasan ibn Sahl is raging; people criticize him for the status which you gave him (al-Fadl) and his brother, and they criticize your nomination of myself as your successor." He asked him, "Who else in my army is aware of that?" He said, "Yahya ibn Mad, Abdul-Aziz ibn Imran, and a number of prominent military commanders." So he called them to his court, and they were Yahya ibn Mad, Abdul-Aziz ibn Imran and Musa and Ali ibn Abu Sa'd, who was son of al-Fadl's sister, and also Khalaf the Egyptian. He asked them about what he had heard, but they refused to tell him anything unless he guaranteed their safety against the threat of revenge by al-Fadl ibn Sahl. He guaranteed that for them, and he wrote each one of them a statement in his own handwriting to that effect. Then they told him about the discords among his subjects, about the deliberate misinformation he heard from al-Fadl regarding Harthamah, and that Tahir ibn al-Husain had done an excellent job serving him and opened many lands to his government and strengthened his caliphate. When he accomplished all of that, he was "rewarded" by banishment to Riqqa where he was not permitted to receive funds from anyone, till his authority was undermined and his troops mutinied, that had his caliphate been in Baghdad, he would have had a better control and nobody would have dared to mislead him as al-Hasan ibn Sahl had. The land from one end to the other was shaking under his feet. Tahir ibn al-Husain had been forgotten that year, since the murder of Muhammed in Riqqa, without being utilized in these wars while someone who was a lot less qualified was in charge...[1]

The picture now was turned upside down in the eyes of al-Ma'mun, but he did not try to change the way how he was dealing with al-Fadl because the latter was in charge of the government base in both Khurasan and Baghdad. In Khurasan, the psychological war, which he waged by deposing Tahir ibn al-Husain and by having Harthamah murdered, nurtured the desire among the commanders of the army for mutiny, pushing them to yield to his wishes and expectations after having felt that al-Ma'mun represented no more than a magic wand in al-Fadl's hands. As regarding Baghdad, it was in the grip of his brother al-Hasan ibn Sahl who was considered as al-Fadl's right hand and the

1 at-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 8, p. 564.

big stick whereby he threatened al-Ma'mun.

As regarding those men who exposed to al-Ma'mun the reality of al-Fadl's conduct and the dangers it implied, they were terrified when al-Fadl tore down the assurances which had been written by al-Ma'mun guaranteeing their safety against his wrath and revenge upon coming to know about their instigation and their support of what Imam al-Rida (ع) had said about him. At-Tabari says,

"When that became certain to al-Ma'mun, he ordered preparations to march to Baghdad, and when al-Fadl ibn Sahl came to know about those preparations, he came to know only about some of them, so he interrogated those men, whipping and jailing some of them and pulling the hair out of the beards of others. Ali ibn Musa [al-Rida] came to his court and told him what had happened to those men and reminded him of his assurances to them. He [al-Ma'mun] answered him by saying that he was only tolerating."[1]

Al-Ma'mun was now convinced that he had no choice except to get rid of al-Fadl ibn Sahl whose job in modern times is equivalent to prime minister. It is also interesting that chance should play a major role in the execution of al-Ma'mun's plan to eliminate al-Fadl, and it may even have been arranged by al-Ma'mun himself.

While on his way to Baghdad, al-Fadl, who was in the company of al-Ma'mun, received a letter from his brother al-Hasan ibn Sahl in which he said, "I have looked in the changing of this year according to the calculations of the movements of the stars and I found out that you will in such and such month, on a Wednesday, taste the pain of red-hot iron and of the burning fire, and I am of the view that you should today go in the company of al-Rida (ع) and the commander of the faithful to the bath-house to take a bath and then pour blood over your body so that the ill luck of this omen may leave you." Al-Fadl, therefore, sent a letter to al-Ma'mun asking him to go with him to the bath-house, and to

1 *Ibid*., p. 565.

request Abul-Hasan (ع) to join them too.

Al-Ma'mun wrote a letter in that same meaning to al-Rida (ع) who wrote him back saying that he would not enter the bath-house the next day, nor would he recommend that the commander of the faithful should enter it either, nor even al-Fadl. But al-Ma'mun repeated his request twice, and Abul-Hasan wrote him again saying, "I shall not enter the bath-house tomorrow for I saw in a vision the Messenger of Allah (ع) last night telling me not to enter the bath-house tomorrow; therefore, I do not advise the commander of the faithful nor al-Fadl to enter the bath-house tomorrow," whereupon al-Ma'mun wrote him saying, "You have, master, said the truth, and so has the Messenger of Allah (ع); I shall not enter the bath-house tomorrow, and al-Fadl knows best what he should do..."[1] Al-Fadl entered the bath-house just to be received by the swords of the assassins as the letter he had received from his brother al-Hasan ibn Sahl had "predicted," or was it really a prediction?!

We do not think it is unlikely that the letter prepared by al-Ma'mun imitated the writing style of the al-Fadl's brother, al-Hasan, in order to avoid being accused of murdering his prime minister. It is also possible that al-Ma'mun wished to get rid of both al-Fadl and Imam al-Rida (ع) by that method of assassination, but the Imam (ع) was alert in the face of al-Ma'mun's cunning and scheming, so he resisted the insistence of al-Ma'mun to enter the bath-house with him and with al-Fadl by tact and caution. The last paragraph of the anecdote tells us clearly that the letter was a plot by al-Ma'mun to kill both al-Fadl and the Imam (ع); otherwise, why did al-Ma'mun abstain from warning al-Fadl against entering the bath-house although the Imam (ع) had asked him to do just that? What provides evidence is the fact that those who killed al-Fadl were among the closest courtiers and train members of al-Ma'mun and, according to one account, they later on faced al-Ma'mun with their accusation that he was the one who asked them to do it. At-Tabari writes the following:

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1 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 491. Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*, p. 294.

When he [Ma'mun] reached Sarkhas, some men assaulted al-Fadl ibn Sahl at the bath-house and struck him with their swords till he was dead, and that was on a Friday two nights before the end of Shaban in the year 202 A.H./817 A.D. They were arrested, and it became clear that those who assassinated al-Fadl were among al-Maman's closest courtiers. They were four in number: Ghalib al-Mas'udi, the black man, Qistantine (Constantine), Faraj al-Daylami, and Muwaffaq of Sicily; they killed him and he was sixty years old and they ran away. Al-Ma'mun posted a reward of ten thousand dinars for anyone who would bring them to him, and they were brought to him by al-Abbas ibn Haitham ibn Bazar-Jamhar al-Daynari, and they said to al-Ma'mun, "But you ordered us to kill him!" He ordered them to be killed. It is also said that when those who killed al-Fadl were arrested, al-Ma'mun interrogated them, and some of them said that Ali ibn Abu Sa'd the son of al-Fadl's sister had dispatched them, while others among them denied that, and he ordered their execution. After that he ordered Abdul-Aiz ibn Imran, Ali, Musa, and Khalaf, to be brought to him, and he interrogated them. They denied having any knowledge of the matter, but he did not believe them and ordered their execution too, sending their heads to al-Hasan ibn Sahl in Wasit as a trophy and informing him about his own pain because of the tragedy of the murder of al-Fadl and that he appointed him in his place.[1]

Thus did al-Ma'mun get rid of the strongest power base within his government which threatened his authority and his fate, leaving only one obstacle in his way to guarantee to uproot the rebellion in Baghdad by dealing with its root causes which included the presence of Imam al-Rida (ع) who, according to the Abbasides, was a difficult knot they

1 at-Tabari, Vol. 8, p. 565. Ibn Khaldun mentions a similar story in Vol. 3, p. 250, of his work titled *Al-Muqaddima fil Tarikh.*

could not be loyal to al-Ma'mun except if he untied it, for its presence meant the end of the Abbaside rule and the beginning of the Alawide.

It was not politically feasible for al-Ma'mun to reach Baghdad accompanied by Imam al-Rida (ع), for that would stir the winds of dissension against him which he might not be strong enough to withstand. We are convinced that al-Ma'mun was the one who plotted to end the life of the Imam (ع) by giving him poisoned grapes. Al-Ma'mun's letter to the Abbasides and the residents of Baghdad, which he wrote after the demise of Imam al-Rida (ع), lends credence to such a conviction. "He wrote the Abbasides and their supporters as well as the people of Baghdad informing them of the death of Ali ibn Musa and that they had resented his nominating him as his successor, asking them now to go back to their loyalty to him."[1] This may be understood as a clear admission that the death of the Imam (ع) was not natural during those circumstances, and the text Ibn Khaldun provides in expressing the contents of this letter provides even clearer clues to accusing al-Ma'mun of murdering him; he says the following in his Tarikh:

"... And al-Ma'mun sent messages to al-Hasan ibn Sahl, to the people of Baghdad, and to his supporters apologizing for naming him his heir to the throne and inviting them to go back to his loyalty.[2]

Al-Saduq narrates saying, "While al-Rida (ع) was breathing his last, al-Ma'mun said to him, "By Allah! I do not know which of the two calamities is greater: losing you and parting from you, or people's accusation that I assassinated you..."[3] In another narrative by Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, al-Ma'mun said to him, "It is very hard for me to live to see you die, and there was some hope hinging upon your stay, yet even harder for me is people saying that I have poisoned you, and Allah knows that I am innocent of that."[4] This situation discloses the fact that the accusation of his own murder of the Imam (ع) was the subject of argument, maybe even of conviction, even then, for al-Ma'mun asserts

1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 8, p. 558, "Events of the Year 203 A.H.".

2 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, Vol. 3, p. 250.

3 al-Saduq,*Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 242.

4 Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 380.

people's accusation of him and he tries to extract an admission from the Imam (ع) clearing him of it, as Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani mentions in his book *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*.

Accounts regarding the method al-Ma'mun employed to kill Imam al-Rida (ع) are abundant. Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani and Shaikh al-Mufid say that he killed him by poisoned pomegranate juice and poisoned grape juice. In his book *Al-Irshad*, al-Mufid quotes Abdullah ibn Bashir saying, Al-Ma'mun ordered me to let my nails grow as long as they could without letting anyone notice that; so I did, then he ordered to see me and he gave me something which looked like tamarind and said, Squeeze this with both your hands,' and I did. Then he stood up, left me and went to see al-Rida (ع) to whom he said, How are you?' He answered, I hope I am alright.' He said, I, too, by the Grace of Allah, am alright; did any well-wisher visit you today?' He answered in the negative, so al-Ma'mun became angry and called upon his servants to come, then he ordered one of them to immediately take the pomegranate juice to him, adding, ... for he cannot do without it.' Then he called me to him and said, Squeeze it with your own hands,' and so I did. Then al-Ma'mun handed the juice to al-Rida (ع) in person, and that was the reason for his death for he stayed only two days before he (ع) died.'"

Abul-Salt al-Harawi is quoted as saying, "I entered al-Rida's house after al-Ma'mun had already left; he said to me, O Abul-Salt! They have done it...!' and he kept unifying and praising Allah." Muhammed ibn al-Jahm is quoted as saying, "Al-Rida (ع) used to love grapes. Some grapes were said to be prepared for him; they were pierced with needles at their very tips and were kept like that for several days. Then the needles were taken out, and they were brought to him and he ate some of them and fell into the sickness to which we have referred. The grapes killed him, and it was said that that was one of the most effective methods of poisoning."[1] Al-Ma'mun was, indeed, the one who killed Imam al-Rida (ع), there is no doubt about it.

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1 Shaikh al-Mufid, *Al-Irshad*, p. 297. A similar narrative is mentioned in al-Isfahani's book *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, pp. 377-378.

His death occurred at Toos in a village called Sanabad, of the Nooqan area, and he was buried at the house of Hameed ibn Tahtaba under the dome where Harun ar-Rashid had been buried, and he was buried beside him facing the *qibla*.[1]

When al-Rida (ع) died, al-Ma'mun did not disclose when it happened, leaving him dead for one day and one night, then he called for Muhammed ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammed and a group of descendants of Abu Talib. When they were present, he showed him [Imam] to them; his corpse looked alright; then he started weeping and addressed the corpse saying, "O Brother! It is indeed very hard for me to see you in such a condition, and I was hoping to go before you, but Allah insisted on carrying out His decree," and he showed a great deal of agony and grief and went out carrying the coffin with others till he reached the place where it is now buried...[2]

... So al-Ma'mun was present there before the grave was dug, and he ordered his [Imam's] grave to be dug beside that of his father, then he approached us and said, "he person inside this coffin told me that when his grave is dug, water and fish will appear underneath; so, dig..." They dug. When they finished digging, a spring of water appeared, and fish appeared in it, then the water dissipated, and al-Rida (ع) was then buried.[3]

In Yemen, in the aftermath of the Imam's assassination, Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Ja'far rebelled and took control of the government after banishing al-Ma'mun's governor. In Mecca, al-Husain ibn al-Hasan al-Aftas revolted, and Muhammed ibn Ja'far was named caliph. In Basra, Zaid ibn Musa ibn Ja'far rebelled. He was nicknamed "Zaid of the fire" due to the number of the homes of the Abbasides and of their followers which he had burnt. Whenever he came across a man draped in black, he would burn his home. Ali ibn Sa'd marched to him. Zaid requested him to guarantee his safety if he gave up, and Ali agreed. But he

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1 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

2 al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 378.

3 *Ibid*., p. 380.

nevertheless arrested him[1] and sent him to al-Hasan ibn Sahl who ordered to have him executed while al-Hajjaj ibn Khaythamah was present, so he said, “Prince! Do not rush, for I have a piece of advice for you.” He stopped the executioner and came close to him. He said, “Prince! Did you receive instructions from the commander of the faithful to do what you are about to?” He answered in the negative, so he asked again, “Then why are you executing the cousin of the commander of the faithful without his knowledge or consultation?” Then he narrated for him the story of Abu Abdullah al-Aftas whom ar-Rashid jailed under the watchful eyes of Ja'far ibn Yahya. Ja'far killed him without his knowledge and sent his head on a platter to him together with other Nawraz[2] presents. When ar-Rashid ordered Masrar to kill Ja'far, he said to him, “If Ja'far asked you about his crime for which you are killing him, tell him that you are killing him for his own killing of my cousin Ibn al-Aftas whom he killed without my knowledge.” Then al-Hajjaj ibn Khaythamah said to al-Hasan ibn Sahl, “O Prince! Do you feel secure should anything happen between you and the commander of the faithful if you kill this man and use it as an excuse just as ar-Rashid had done against Ja'far ibn Yahya?” Al-Hasan said to al-Hajjaj, “May Allah reward you!” Then he ordered Zaid to be returned to his prison where he was kept till he was transported to al-Ma'mun. Once he was there, al-Ma'mun sent him to his brother al-Rida (ع) who set him free.[3] One of the interesting anecdotes narrated about him is the following:

"When he was brought to al-Ma'mun, the latter said to him, “O Zaid! You led the uprising in Basra, and instead of starting with the homes of our common enemies: the Umayyads, Banu Thaqaf, Uday, Bahila and al Ziyad, you targeted the homes of your own cousins.” Zaid, who had a humorous temper, said, “I, indeed, erred from each direction, O commander of the faithful! If I go back, I will start with our enemies!”

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1 Ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 5, pp. 175-177.

2 Nawraz is the first day of Spring and, hence, the first day of the Persian (and Kurdish) new year. It is celebrated outdoors by enjoying the beauty of nature.

3 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 233.

Al-Ma'mun laughed and sent him to his brother al-Rida (ع) saying, “I have pardoned him just to please you.” When he was brought to the Imam (ع), he was reprimanded then released."[1]

What we try to get acquainted with by examining the Imam’s stand towards his brother “Zaid of the fire” was the reality regarding the Imam’s viewpoint of the revolutionary method employed by the Alawides in their revolutions against the Abbasides. We find the Imam (ع) taking a strictly negative stand towards his brother Zaid. Yet he did not rebuke him and blame him simply because he had revolted against the government, but rather because he had committed several unlawful acts according to Islamic Shari’a such as looting, confiscating, burning, in which acts he did not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. Other than that, the sincere Alawide revolutions which aimed at standing in the face of injustice and oppression used to enjoy the support of the Imams who considered them the only way to disclose to the nation how corrupt the government was, and to make them aware of its infringements and transgressions.

Al-Ma'mun’s tolerance towards those who rebelled against him was not in contradiction with his general conduct. On one hand, he wanted to compete with the Alawides in winning the public opinion to his side. On the other hand, he was trying to stay away from getting involved in shedding their blood and seeking revenge against them which did not agree with his inclination, though in theory, towards the Alawides.

The Imam (ع) had sided with the Alawide revolution of Ibn Tabataba under the command of Abul-Saraya; this is a fact. Muhammed ibn al-Athram, Medina’s chief of the police force of Muhammed ibn Sulayman al-Alawi during the days of Abul-Saraya, is quoted as saying, “His near in kin and some people from Quraish gathered around him and swore the oath of allegiance to him saying, If you send word to Abul-Hasan (ع), he will surely support us, and we will be thus united.’ Sulayman said to me, Go to him and convey my greetings to him and tell him that his kinfolk have gathered and desired that he should join

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1 *Ibid.*

them; so, if you wish, please do so.' So I met him at al-Hamra and I conveyed the message to him. He said, "Convey my greeting to him and tell him that I will join him after twenty days." I conveyed to him the message with which I was sent. On the 18th day, Warqa, al-Jalladi's commander, marched towards us, whereupon I ran in the direction of the two Surs. When I heard someone calling me 'O Abu Athram!', I turned back, and it was Abul-Hasan (ع) asking me: 'Did the twenty days pass already?!'"[1]

Such cautious stand of the Imam (ع) was not due to evading his participation in the revolutionary movement but was the result of a realistic calculation of the development of events in the sphere of the movement of revolutions along the Abbaside rule and before them the Umayyad. For this reason, we cannot conclude that the Imam's lack of participation in a rebellion meant that he was not convinced of the principle of its necessity.

Now let us turn to the intellectual contributions of this great sage to Islam in particular and to humanity in general. Nobody can do justice to all the rich aspects of the intellectual life of Imam al-Rida (ع), but let us glance at his intellectual output in various fields of knowledge and scholarship.

Some historians doubted the scholarship of the Imams, let alone their scholarly superiority, basing their doubts on the claim that had they been truly scholars, their books would have been made available to the public as is the case with all other scholars. Anyone who considers the revolution of Imam Husain (ع) against Yazid as a mistake committed by the Imam (ع) and a gross miscalculation can be expected to make a statement like this which we cannot attribute to ignorance or to lack of the ability to know, but it is nothing other than the dark cloud of sectarian prejudice forming a curtain between a prejudiced person and his seeing events, issues, and reflections as they really are. This is true about Muslims and non-Muslims. A "fair-minded" historian is asked to tell us about the books authored by the sahaba and their works from whom he derived the principles and precepts of the creed of the Prophet

1 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 208.

(ص), or even the works of the tabieen whom he regards as the second class that is knowledgeable of the issues of the sharaa, custodians of its structure. What books did the "righteous caliphs" write?! Can you call the title of any of them besides Nahjul-Balagha or Mushaf Fatima?! Let us stop here for a minute; surely many readers have heard and probably read Nahjul-Balagha, but not many of them are familiar with Fatima's mushaf; so, let us shed some light on it here.

Linguistically, the word "mushaf" means: a collection of suhuf, plural of sahafa, a page or a tablet. The word "qur'an" means: a reading material, a written text. Both words are used at the present time to denote the Book of Allah, the Holy Qur'an, but that was not the case during the dawn of Islam. Mushaf Fatima, or Fatima's mushaf, is not a copy of the Holy Qur'an as one may be tempted to believe. One of the scholars who sheds light on it is Thiqatul-Islam Muhammed ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni. He does so on page 295 and following pages of Vol. 1 of his famous classic work titled *Usul al-Kafi*. The edition consulted for this book was published by Dar al-Ta'aruf (Beirut, Lebanon) in 1411 A.H./1990 A.D. Al-Kulayni quotes a dialogue between Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq **(ع)** and his great companion, Abu Busayr, wherein the Imam **(ع)** details the most precious relics Ahl al-Bayt **(ع)** have, and the list includes, among others, Fatima's mushaf. The Imam **(ع)** described this *mushaf* as follows: "It is a *mushaf* three times the size of the Qur'an, yet it does not contain even one Qur'anic verse." The Imam **(ع)** continued to describe the extent of its contents to Abu Busayr. It contains, among others, a chronology of Islamic events, numerous traditions of the Prophet (ص), numerous *qudsi* traditions and many narratives related by arch-angel Gabriel to the Prophet (ص). Refer to this text for a description of "al-jami'a", a 70-yard long book written on ox skin by the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

The legacy our Imams, members of Ahl al-Bayt (ع) in various fields of knowledge is narrated about them by those with whom they associated, their admirers and sincere followers, and it is sufficient to acquaint us with the extent of their knowledge and superiority over all others barring none. Is it really possible that Ibn Khaldun did not review such legacy of ahadith which reached us through them and recorded by scholars and thinkers and upon which the structure of their school of

thought, in which a large section of the nation believes, stood? We doubt it; nay, we are sure about the unrealistic nature of such an odd question especially since Ibn Khaldun is one of the most knowledgeable, highly intellectual, and mature writers. A writer of such caliber is not expected to be so ignorant. Ignorant he was not, prejudiced he surely was, and so are millions others...

The Imams were tested during various periods of their lives by pressing crises due to the trespassing of oppressive rulers on their civil liberties. They pursued their followers and sincere adherents, straitening on them in various aspects of their everyday life, so much so that the word rafidi came to represent in the eyes of the rulers the final indictment of anyone proven to be "guilty" of its context, a believer in its background. Because of that, the chance was lost for many of those who sought knowledge to derive from that leading fountainhead, and the chance to find the scholarly solutions for the intellectual problems because of which they were disturbing their minds. Despite all these pressures and violent trespassing, mankind is not intellectually deprived of a great deal of intellectual masterpieces which the Imams (ع) dictated to their students and disciples in various aspects of scholarship. Some of those students used to bribe the jailers so that they might agree to carry written questions to the jailed Imam (ع) and bring them back his answers. They only desired to benefit from the presence of the Imam (ع), and they aspired to be faithful to the trust of scholarship. They, moreover, wanted to protect the faith from the abyss of doubt and suspicion. The biography of the jailed Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (ع) bears witness to these facts according to the testimony of those who quoted him. Historians and biographers of Imam al-Rida (ع) do, in fact, mention some books authored by the Imam (ع) besides his narration of hadith. They record what he dictated to those who asked him various questions and whatever he confided to his close companions who used to frequently question him about various types of knowledge which they could not fully comprehend and digest.

Among such books is *Al-Fiqh al-Radawi* which was for some time the object of debate among scholars. There are among the latter those who considered it to be authored by the Imam (ع), relied on it, and built their arguments on its premises. Among such scholars were: al-Majlisi

(both al-Majlisi senior, the father, and his son, the renown author of *Bihar al-Anwar*, Sayyid Bahr al-Ulum, Shaikh al-Nawari, and others. The story of how this book surfaced is interesting. A a group of the residents of Qum brought a copy with them to Mecca where the ruler-judge (qadi-emir) Sayyid Husain al-Isfahani saw it and testified to its being authored by al-Rida (ع) and made a copy of it for himself which he brought to Isfahan. There, he showed it to al-Majlisi (senior) who was, likewise, sure it was authored by the Imam (ع) and so was his son the second al-Majlisi (junior). The latter quoted the ahadith it contained in his voluminous book Bihar al-Anwar, making the book one of his references, and this is how its fame spread.

In his Introduction to *Bihar al-Anwar*, al-Majlisi writes, "I was told about the book *Fiqh al-Rida* by the virtuous traditionist the ruler-judge Husain, may Allah be Gracious to his soul, after returning to Isfahan. He said to me, It happened that during the time when I was neighbouring the House of Allah, a group of the residents of Qum visited me while performing their *hajj* and they had with them an old book the date of its writing agreed with the date during which al-Rida (ع) was alive.'" Al-Majlisi continues to say, "I heard my father saying that it was written in the handwriting of al-Rida (ع), and a large number of dignitaries testified to the same."

Among the Imam's scientific books is what is known as *Al-Risala al-Thahabiyya fil Tibb* (the golden medical dissertation) for which sources are counted reaching sometimes to Muhammed ibn Jumhar, and sometimes to al-Hasan ibn Muhammed al-Nawfali who was accepted as trustworthy by al-Najjashi who described him as "highly esteemed and trustworthy; he narrated one text about al-Rida (ع)," which could be "the golden medical dissertation."

It is possible that the dissertation's fame among scholars, and their consensus in various centuries that the Imam (ع) was its author, and that nobody doubted such an authorship, are enough proofs leading the researcher to comfortably conclude that it was, indeed, from the intellectual output of Imam al-Rida (ع) himself. But what is this dissertation all about, anyway?

This dissertation is one of the most precious pieces of Islamic legacy dealing with the science of medicine. It is a summary of a number of medical sciences such as anatomy, biology, physiology, pathology and preventive medicine. Its contents are also relevant to the sciences of nutrition and chemistry, in addition to other medicine-related branches of science. The Imam (ع) sent this dissertation to the caliph al-Ma'mun around the year 201 A.H./816 A.D., that is to say, when medicine was a primitive science and its research was not conducted scientifically but based on practice alone rather than on scientific discoveries. The science of bacteriology was not yet discovered, nor was there any significant knowledge of nutritional supplements such as vitamins, nor were there other significant medical discoveries for fighting microbes such as penicillin, streptomycin, oromycin, etc. On the surface, the dissertation seemed to be very simple in order to be in line with the mentality of that time, but it is quite deep and complicated in its implications and it is worthy of a serious scientific study and lengthy researches to unveil its secrets and uncover its treasures. It should be compared with modern scientific facts.[1] Al-Ma'mun was very pleased to receive that dissertation and he expressed how much he cherished it by ordering to have it written down in gold and to be deposited at his "depository of wisdom," hence its name, "the golden dissertation." In praising it, al-Ma'mun said, "I have reviewed the dissertation of my learned cousin, the loved and virtuous one, the logical physician, which deals with the betterment of the body, the conduct of bathing, the balance of nutrition, and I found it very well organized and one of the best blessings. I carefully studied it, reviewed and contemplated upon it, till its wisdom manifested itself to me, and its benefits became obvious, and it found its place to my heart, so I learned it by heart and I understood it by my mind, for I found it to be a most precious item to post, a great treasure, and a most useful thing, so I ordered it to be written in gold due to its being precious, and I deposited it at the depository of wisdom after I had it copied down by the descendants of Hashim, the youths of the nation. Bodies become healthy by balanced diets, and life becomes possible by overcoming disease, and through life wisdom is achieved, and through wisdom Paradise is won. It is worthy of being safeguarded and treasured... It is so because it came

1 *Ibid*., pp. 19-20.

out of the house of those who derive their knowledge from the knowledge of the Chosen One (ع), the missive of the prophets, the arguments of successors to the prophets, the manners of scholars, the cure to the hearts and the sick from among the people of ignorance and blindness..., may Allah be pleased with them, bless and be merciful to them, the first of them and the last, the young and the old. I showed it to the elite from among my closest train who are known for their wisdom and knowledge of medicine, and who are authors of books, those who are counted among the people of knowledge and described with wisdom. Each one of them lauded it and thought highly of it, elevated it with esteem and evaluated it in order to be fair to its author, submitting to him, believing in the wisdom he included therein."[1]

Al-Ma'mun had a very inquisitive mind and a thirst for knowledge; he was always eager to obtain more and more knowledge. During one of his scientific debates, a group of physicians and philosophers in Nishapur, including Yuhanna (John) ibn Masawayh, the physician, Jibraeel (Gabriel) ibn Bakhtishoo[2], the physician, Salih ibn Salhamah, the Indian philosopher, in addition to others, had gathered. Discussion turned to medicine and how through it can the bodies be improved. Al-Ma'mun and his attendants were involved in a very lengthy discussion of the subject. They were debating how Allah created the human body and the contradictory things in it, the four elements, the harms and the benefits of various types of food. All this went on as the Imam (ع) kept silent and did not take part in any of it. Al-Ma'mun, therefore, said to him, "What do you have to say, O father of al-Hasan, about today's subject of discussion?" Abul-Hasan (ع) said, "I have of it the knowledge of what I have personally tested and came to know about its accuracy by experience and by the passage of time in addition to what I was told by my ancestors of what nobody can afford to be ignorant of, nor excused for leaving out. I shall compile it with an equal portion of what everyone should know." Al-Ma'mun, following that, had to go in

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1 Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, *Ayan al-Shi'a*, Vol. 4, pp. 2, 143 and 144.

2 The reader can correctly conclude that there were many Christian and Jewish scholars and scientists who received a great deal of respect and support from caliph al-Ma'mun who was a scholar in his own right. His time was, indeed, a golden period of learning and scholarship despite all the contemporary political turmoil.

a hurry to Balkh, now a province in northern Afghanistan the capital of which is Mazar Sharif[1], and Abul-Hasan (ع) did not accompany him; therefore, al-Ma'mun sent him from there a letter asking him to fulfill his promise and to make that compilation. Al-Rida (ع) wrote him saying,

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful; My reliance is upon Allah. I have received the letter of the commander of the faithful ordering me to acquaint him with what is needed of matters which I have tested and heard, about foods and drinks, medicines, venesection, blood letting, bathing, poisons, what should be avoided, and other things which manage the health of the body, and I explained what is needed to be done regarding one's own body, and Allah is the One Who grants success.

After that he initiated his dissertation. A good number of scholars attempted to write commentaries on the dissertation; here is a partial listing of some of them so that the discreet reader may refer to them if he so wishes:

1. *Tarjamat al-Alawi lil Tibb al-Radawi* of Sayyid Diaud-Dan Abul-Rida Fadlallah ibn Ali al-Rawandi (d. 548 A.H./1153 A.D.).

2. *Tarjamat al-Thahabiyya* by mawla FaydAllah 'Usarah al-Tasatturi, an authority on medicine and astrology during the regime of Fath-Ali Khan. This book was written in secrecy in about 107 A.H./725 A.D. A handwritten copy of the manuscript dated 1133 A.H./1721 A.D. is available at the Mishkat Library of Tehran's University.

3. *Tarjamat al-Thahabiyya* by Muhammed Baqir al-Majlisi. It is available at the private library of the late Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr in Kazimiyya (north Baghdad, Iraq).

4. *'Afiyat al-Bariyya fi Sharh al-Thahabiyya* by Mirza Muhammed

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1 "Mazar Sharif" means: a sacred mausoleum. It is named so because it houses the shrine of Khavajeh Abu Nasr Parsa, a pious man from the Persian region of Parsa who died and was buried there.

Hadi son of Mirza Muhammed Salih al-Sharazi. It was authored during the reign of Sultan Husain al-Safawi (the Safavid). It is in handwritten manuscript form and is available at the Sayyid Husain al-Hamadani Library, Najaf al-Ashraf (Iraq).

5. *Sharh Tibb al-Rida* by mawla Muhammed Sharif al-Khatunabadi. He authored it around 1120 A.H./1709 A.D.

6. *Tarjamat al-Thahabiyya* by Sayyid Shamsud-Din Muhammed ibn Muhammed Bada al-Radawi al-Mashhadi. Its writing was finished in 1155 A.H./1743 A.D. and is available at the Shaikh Muhammed Ali Akbar al-Nahawandi Library in Khurasan (Iran).

7. *Sharh Tibb al-Rida* by Sayyid Abdulllah al-Shubber who died in 1242 A.H./1827 A.D. Shaikh al-Nawari indicated in some of his writings that he had seen that copy himself.

8. *Sharh Tibb al-Rida* by mawla Muhammed ibn al-Hajj Muhammed Hasan al-Mashhadi who taught at Mashhad and died in 1257 A.H./1842 A.D.

9. *Sharh Tibb al-Rida* by mawla Nawraz Ali al-Bastami.

10. *Al-Mahmoodiyya* by al-Hajj Kazim al-Masawi al-Zanjani who died in 1292 A.H./1876 A.D. It is in manuscript form and is available with the author's grandsons.

There are others besides these scholars who explained and commented on it, revealing what is hidden of its secrets and obscure treasures. Probably the latest person to explain it and to conduct a comparative

study between its theory and the latest modern scientific discoveries is Dr. Abdul-Sahib Zaini who did so in the "Multaqa al-Asrayn" periodical series.

Among other works, credit for which goes to this great Imam ( ), is Sahafat al-Rida which deals with fiqh. The author of *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* described it as "among the well-known books which is relied upon and which no other book, before it or after it, is more esteemed or reliable."

Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, in his encylopædic work titled A'yan al-Shi'a[1], mentions an isnad (ascription) related to it alone from Shaikh Abdul-Wasi' al-Yemani al-Zaydi for the copy brought by the said Shaikh from Yemen and published in Damascus, Syria. Also, some of its copies contain its ascription to Abu Ali al-Tibrisi.

Al-Mustadrak states the following: "The esteemed Mirza Abd-Allah Afandi, in his *Riyad al-Ulema'*, has compiled all its sources and said, Among them is a copy of this *Saheefa* which I saw at the town of Ardabil (chief town of the Azerbaijan district, Iran), and its sanad was...,' then he goes on to indicate its *sanad*. Among other works attributed to the Imam ( ) is the book titled Mahd al-Islam wa Shara'i ad-Dan which is referred to by al-Saduq in his Uyun Akhbar al-Rida through al-Fadl ibn Shathan, but he did not indicate that it was written in response to al-Ma'mun's request.[2]

Ajwibat Musa'il Ibn Sinan ("Answers to ibn Sinan's Queries") can be described as one of the works of the Imam ( ). It contains his answers to questions put forth to him by Ibn Sinan. But this cannot be described

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1 This great encylopedia falls in ten volumes, excluding its thorough and very well arranged Index which constitutes a volume by itself. The copy we have in our library is dated 1406 A.H./1986 A.D. and is published by Dar al-Ta'aruf lil Matbu'at (P.O. Box 8601, Beirut, Lebanon). It lists thousands of Shi'a men of letters, scholars, theologians, poets, authors, politicians, narrators of traditions, etc. It is edited by the author's son, the renown scholar Hasan al-Amin, author of many books probably the most famous of which is the 11-volume encylopedia titled *Al-Ghadir*..

2 al-Saduq, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, Vol. 2, p. 121.

as a book authored by the Imam ( ); otherwise, the collection of his answers to the questions of many others, which deal with various fields of knowledge and scholarship, must be also described as such. Ilal Ibn Shathan: This book contains the Imam's answers to questions relevant to ailments put forth to him by Ibn Shathan.

On various occasions, al-Ma'mun tried to force Imam al-Rida ( ) into the arena of complex debates with various groups and creeds. He used to conduct scientific and intellectual sessions to which he invited great thinkers, leading scientists, the atheists of the century, and debaters whose scientific caliber was feared, and before the stubbornness of whose complex arguments the evidence was muted, and due to the fierceness of whose doubt the proof was weakened. In all such debates, the Imam would come out victorious over his opponents due to the tremendous power of knowledge with which the Almighty endowed him, for such are the miracles of the Infallible Imams. None of them ever had to force himself into the sophistry of arguments to which some might have resorted in order to smash his opponent's argument and weaken his ability to provide evidence. Rather, he depended in his debates on honest arguments in order to prove right to be right and on his miraculous ability of conviction and calm stylistic method.

Al-Nawfali tried to warn the Imam against attempting to deal with the debates of such people when the Imam asked him why al-Ma'mun had invited him to debate them, for al-Ma'mun had asked the Catholic archbishop, the High Rabbi, the leading Sabians, the Hindu high priest, followers of Zoroaster, Nestus the Roman medical scientist, and a group of orators of his time, to engage in scientific debates with Imam al-Rida ( ).

He dispatched Yasir, the servant, to tell the Imam about the time when the debate would start, requesting him to attend. When Yasir went out and al-Nawfali was alone with the Imam, the Imam ( ) turned to him and asked him in the form of a dialogue, "O Nawfali! You are an Iraqi, and the heart of an Iraqi is not severe; so, what can you gain from causing your cousin to require us to meet with disbelievers and rhetoricians?" Al-Nawfali answered, "May my life be sacrificed for yours! He wants to put you to test, and he loves to know how much

knowledge you have. He has, indeed, built his assumption on a shaky foundation, and doomed, by Allah, is what he has built." He asked him, "And what has he built?" He answered him saying, "Scholars of kalam and innovators are the antithesis of the scholars. A scholar does not deny the undeniable, whereas rhetoricians and polytheists are people who deny and try to prove what is not true. If you argue with them and tell them that Allah is One, they would say, Prove His Oneness,' and if you say that Muhammed ( ) is the Messenger of Allah, they would say, Confirm his Message,' then they would press their lies on a person while he tries to disprove their lies, and they would continue to prove that he is mistaken till he abandons his argument; so, beware of them, may my life be sacrificed for you." The Imam ( ) smiled and asked him, "O Nawfali! Do you fear that they will disprove my argument?" He answered, "No, by Allah! I have never worried about you, and I hope Allah will enable you to have the upper hand over them." The Imam asked him again, "O Nawfali! Would you like to know when al-Ma'mun will feel remorseful?" He answered, "Yes." He said, "When he hears me argue with the people of the Torah quoting their own Torah, with the people of the Gospel (Bible) quoting their own Gospel, with the people of the Psalms quoting their own Psalms, with Zoroastrians arguing in their Persian language, with the Romans in their own Latin, and with rhetoricians using their very rhetoric. So, if I closed all the avenues of argument in the face of each arguing party and disproved his claim, making him renounce his statement from its onset and referring to my own statement, then al-Ma'mun will realize that he will not achieve what he aspires. It is then that he will feel regretful; We are Allah's, and Unto Him is our return."

Thus does the Imam show that he was not concerned about such persons whom al-Ma'mun wished to gather together against him trying to embarrass him with their falsification and arguments which he hoped might close for the Imam ( ) all the avenues of argument.

Whenever a session started and the Imam ( ) was invited to join it, discussion started and the Imam ( ) debated with the Catholics, making the Bible his reference to prove his own defense of the Unity of

Allah (versus their Trinity) and disprove the so-called godhead of Christ ( ). Then he would follow up with a magnificent discussion proving that the Bible in circulation today is not the same which Allah had revealed to Christ ( ) and that it is authored by some of the disciples of Jesus ( ) who are the authors of the four gospels, not Jesus ( ), depending in his argument on the fact that the details presented by each one of them stand in flagrant contradiction with those of the other.

Let us digress here for a minute to tackle the issue of Christianity in brief, particularly that of Catholicism, then we will bring the reader a debate between Imam al-Rida ( ) and a Catholic archbishop.

The reader already knows that the only Bible accepted by Muslims is the one compiled by Saint Barnabas, a gospel which was not canonized at the famous Nicæa, N.W. Asia Minor, conference of 325 A.D. called for by Emperor Constantine who aspired to put an end to the sectarian differences among the Christians of his time. The next few paragraphs are excerpted from my book Mary and Jesus in Islam:

According to the Gospel of Matthew, and to be exact Ch. 10, verse 4, the list of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ is as follows: Simon (or Peter), Andrew (Peter's brother), James (son of Zebedee), John (James' brother), Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, another Simon who is said to be "a member of The Zealots,' a subversive political party," and Judas Iscariot. Why is the name of Saint Barnabas not among them, and how did he come to write his own Gospel, the only one accepted by Muslims as the true Bible? With all their prejudices, speculations, sectarian motivations, it is unwise to accept what today's or yesterday's Christians tell us about Saint Barnabas and his Bible, or about the other disciples. The Encyclopedia Britannica III, for example, describes those who believed that Christ was human and not divine as heretics, and so do many Christian writers and theologians. An independent research, therefore, will yield better results, that's for sure. One such research has been undertaken by M.A. Yusseff who published his findings in a very interesting book titled The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Gospel of Barnabas, and the New Testament which was published in 1405 A.H./1985 A.D.

by the American Trust Publications of Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A.[1] Saint Barnabas was originally called Joseph the Levite, or Joses the Levite, and is better known as Matthai, or Matthias. In the Christian document known as Recognitions, Matthias is identified as another name for Apostle Barnabas, which is correct. In another document known as Homilies, Barnabas is said to be a personal Apostle of Jesus, "a strict servant of the Law," and, hence, one of the original twelve Disciples (or Apostles) of Jesus Christ. The Jews, too, list his name among not twelve but five apostles, the remaining four being: Naki, Nester (perhaps Nestor after whom Nestorian Christians are named), Buni, and Todah. But we find the name "Lebbacus" among these disciples in Matthew 10:13, that of "Judas son of James" in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13, both contradicting other Biblical accounts; so, which one is correct and which one is not?!

Saint Barnabas was born in Cyprus in the first century A.D. Other references to him are recorded in the Bible in Acts 11:19 and 15:41. He is said as having joined the Jerusalem church "after the alleged crucifixion of Jesus[2]," which is not true, sold his property, and gave the proceeds as a donation to his community. He founded the church in Antioch (Turkish Antakya; see footnote above about the history of this city), where he preached. Inviting Paul of Tarsus (Turkey) to be his assistant, he undertook missionary activity and then went to Jerusalem. Shortly after 48 A.D., a conflict separated both men, and Barnabas sailed home to Cyprus. Where did he write his Gospel and when? Nobody seems to know. How did he die? Nobody seems to know, yet he is called a martyr... We are also told that he knew St. Mark. In 488 A.D., his grave was discovered near the Monastery of St. Barnabas in the Cypriot city of Salamis. A copy of his Gospel was found buried with him[3]. The accurate list of the twelve disciples of Jesus exists in the Gospel of St. Barnabas himself who records the following:

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1 For the benefit of our reader, the full address of the said Publisher is: ATP, 10900 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46231. This book should be in every personal and public library.

2 This misleading statement exists in Vol. One of the world renown Encyclopedia Britannica III. How many other errors exist in this Encyclopedia?

Jesus, having returned to the region of Jerusalem, was found again of the people with exceedingly great joy, and they implored him to abide with them, for his words were not as those of the scribes, but were with power; for they touched the heart.

Jesus, seeing that great was the multitude of them that returned to their heart for to walk in the law of God, went up into the mountain, and abode all night in prayer. When the day came he descended from the mountain and chose twelve whom he called apostles, among whom is Judas, who was slain upon the cross[1]. Their names are: Andrew and Peter his brother, fishermen; Barnabas, who wrote this, with Matthew the publican, who sat at the receipt of custom; John and James, son of Zebedee; Thaddaeus and Judas[2]; Bartholomew and Philip; James, and Judas Iscariot the traitor. To these he always revealed the divine secrets. He made Judas Iscariot his dispenser of that which was given in alms, but he took the tenth part of everything. (The Gospel of Barnabas 14)

The Gospel of St. Barnabas is the one that contains the true teachings of Jesus Christ; it will be discussed later how it refers to Prophet Muammed as the "Paraclete," a Greek word meaning "Messenger" and "Comforter," in Arabic al-Amin... Even if you set aside the Gospel of St. Barnabas, a good Greek translation of the original of John 14:16 will be: "And I will Pray the Patera, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever." The Greek word Patera is erroneously translated into "the Father," a reference to the Almighty,

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3 That copy was later deposited at the Imperial Library at Vienna. It was at a much later date translated into English and edited by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg.

1 This statement, among many others in the Gospel of St. Barnabas, agrees with what we, Muslims, have in the Holy Qur'an. Jesus Christ was not crucified.

2 The reader can easily see that there were two men among the disciples of Jesus named Judas; one of them was crucified, so he was rewarded in heaven, and the other was not, so he was rewarded by the Romans for his treachery. The latter is Judas Iscariot.

in a "modern" version of the Bible which gives the following text for John 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever–the Spirit of Truth."[1] No man of righteousness has earned the title of "the Spirit of Truth" (in Arabic al-adiq) more than Prophet Muammed. A good scholar of Greek will do better than that; he will translate Patera into "Nourisher" or "Sustainer," and Paraclete into "Comforter," al-Amin in Arabic, a title given to Prophet Muammed even before he had started his mission. The translation of what John has in 14:16-17 should instead run as follows:

"And I will request the Nourisher (God) to send you another Messenger, so that he may be (your) guide always, the inspired, the Truthful, whom the world at large will not welcome because it will not comprehend or appreciate him, but you (believers) will recognize him. He will dwell with you and (his message) will find a place in your hearts."

A testimony to the truth of the statement saying "... and (his message) will find a place in your hearts" is that most converts to Islam used to follow one sect of Christianity or another. Upon acceptance of Islam, such converts do not abandon Christ; they simply rediscover him and get to know the real Christ whose message has been and is still being distorted. The best Christians in the world are the Muslims. Muslims wholeheartedly honour Jesus Christ and his true and pristine message presented by Prophet Muammed; read the following verses of the Holy Qur'an and see for yourself how such message is described:

Allah said: O Jesus! I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the Day of Resurrection... (3:55)

Carefully examine the above verse especially this portion: "... and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the Day of Resurrection" and see how the Almighty raises the status of those who

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1 *The Great News: The New Testament* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: International Bible Society, 1984).

follow Jesus above those who disbelieve in him till the Day of Judgment. Those who believe in Jesus Christ and who follow his pristine message are none other than the Muslims, whereas the rest may be divided into two groups: 1) those who have distorted the message of Jesus Christ and lied about it one generation after another and are still doing so, and 2) the Jews who disbelieved in him and in his message and disbelieved in his virgin birth. Although the Jews now are the masters of the world, thanks to the West in general and to the U.S. in particular, but such power they will not keep forever. They will eventually weaken because the promise of the Almighty is true and irreversible; they will be exposed for what they really are: the anti-Christ, the Dajjal, the disseminator of falsehood through their absolute control over the news and information media.

The Imam ( ) asked the Catholic, "O Christian! Are you familiar with a statement in the Bible wherein Jesus says: 'I am going to my Lord and your Lord, and the Paraclete is coming who shall testify to my truth just as I testified for him, and he shall explain everything to you, and he shall be the one to expose all the sins of nations, and he shall be the one to smash the pillar of apostasy'?[2] The Catholic said, 'We admit all what you have just quoted of the Bible." The Imam asked him, "Do you testify that such a statement is actually fixed in the Bible?" "Yes," said the Catholic. Imam al-Rida said, "O Catholic! Could you tell me about the first Bible, how you lost it then found it, and who put your existing Bible together?" The Catholic said, "We did not lose the Bible except for one single day then we found it fresh; John and Matthew brought it back to us." Imam al-Rida ( ) said, "How little your knowledge of the Bible and its scholars is! If such is your claim, then why do you dispute with one another about the Bible? Rather, controversy has always revolved around the Bible which is in your hands today. Had it been the same as the first one was, you would not have thus disputed (with one another) about it, but I shall inform you of such controversy myself."

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2 This is a rough translation of the original Arabic text. A thorough research of the Bible may yield better results and reveal the exact Biblical verse the Imam was referring to. Unfortunately, the Imam did not specify which of the four Gospels he was quoting. Consulting a Bible in Arabic may also produce the same anticipated result: the number of the exact verse and the name of the Gospel the Imam had in mind.

The Imam went on to state the following:

“Be informed that when the first Bible was lost, the Christians gathered around their scholars and said to them: 'Jesus son of Mary has been killed, and we do not know where the Bible is. You are the scholars; so, what do you have with you?’ Luke and Mark said to them, We have learned the Bible by heart; so, do not grieve in its regard, and do not forsake the churches, for we shall recite to you one Gospel after another on each Sunday till we put it all together.’ Luke, Mark, John and Matthew sat together, and they put this Bible of yours for you after you had lost the first (original) one. These four men were students of the early disciples; are you aware of that?!” The Catholic answered, “This I did not know and now I do. It is also now clear to me how much you know about the Bible, and I have heard from you things with which I was familiar and to which my heart testifies to be the truth. I have, therefore, gained a better understanding.” Imam al-Rida then said to him, “How do you, then, find the testimony of these men?” “Accurate,” said the Catholic, “since they are the scholars of the Bible, and everything to which they testified is the truth.” Imam al-Ria then turned to al-Mamoon and his company and said, “Bear witness to what he has just said.” They said, “We testify.” Then the Imam turned to the Catholic and said, “I challenge you to swear by the son and his mother whether you know if Matthew had said, The Messiah is David son of Abraham son of Isaac son of Jacob son of Yehuda son of Khadrun’, and that Mark said about the lineage of Jesus son of Mary that he was 'The word of God which He placed in the human body, so it became human’, and that Luke said, 'Jesus son of Mary and his mother were humans of flesh and blood, so the Holy Spirit entered into them’. Then you testify that Jesus had himself said the following about his creation: 'I tell you the truth: None ascends the heavens except that he descends therefrom except the man who rides the camel, the seal of the prophets, for he shall ascend to the heavens then shall he descend;’ so, what do you say about that?” The Catholic said, “This is the speech of Jesus,

and we do not deny it." Imam al-Rida ( ) said, "If so, what do you say about the testimony of Luke, Mark, and Matthew with regard to Jesus and what they had attributed to him?" The Catholic said, "They lied about Jesus..." Imam al-Rida ( ) turned to the audience and said, "O people! Has he not (a moment ago) testified to their truthfulness, saying that they were the scholars of the Bible and what they said is the truth?!" The Catholic said to the Imam ( ), "O scholar of the Muslims! I would like you to excuse me from discussing these men." After a while the Imam ( ) turned to that Catholic, who was an arch-bishop, and said, "In the Bible, it is written: 'The son of the virtuous woman is departing, and the Paraclete is coming after him, and he shall lighten the burdens and explain everything to you, and he shall testify for me as I have testified to you. I have brought you the parables, and he shall bring you the interpretation.' Do you believe that such a text exists in the Bible?" The Catholic answered in the affirmative.[1]

The Holy Qur'an, moreover, tells us in Surat al-Saff (Ch. 61) that "Jesus son of Mary said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the prophet of Allah to you testifying to that which is before me of the Torah and giving the glad tidings of a Prophet who will come after me; his name is Amed; but when he came to them with clear arguments, they said: This is clear magic" (Qur'an, 61:6). Compare this Qur'anic verse with the following text in the Gospel of St. Barnabas:

Thereupon said the disciples, "O master, it is thus written in the book of Moses, that in Isaac was the promise made."

Jesus answered with a groan, "It is so written, but Moses wrote it not, nor Joshua, but rather our rabbins (rabbis), who fear not God. Verily, I say to you that if you consider the words of the angel Gabriel, you shall discover the malice of our scribes and doctors. For the angel said: Abraham, all the world shall know how God loves you, but how shall the world know the love that you bear to God? Assuredly it is necessary

1 al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 14, pp. 331-333. Again, since this text is my translation from the Arabic original, the Imam's quotations may not be exact. Consulting a Bible written in Arabic will be worthwhile and will provide the numbers of the chapters and verses to which the Imam here refers. Unfortunately, I do not have a copy of the Bible in Arabic.

that you do something for the love of God.' Abraham answered, 'Behold the servant of God ready to do all that which God shall will.'

"Then spoke God, saying to Abraham, 'Take your son, your firstborn Ishmael, and come up the mountain to sacrifice him.' How is Isaac firstborn, if when Isaac was born Ishmael was seven years old?!"

Then answered Jesus, "Verily I say to you that Satan ever seeks to annul the laws of God. Therefore he with his followers, hypocrites and evildoers, the former with false doctrine, the latter with lewd living, today have contaminated almost all things, so that scarcely is the truth found. Woe to the hypocrites, for the praises of this world shall turn for them into insults and torments in hell.

"I, therefore, say to you that the messenger of God is a splendor that shall give gladness to nearly all that God has made, for he is adorned with the spirit of understanding and of counsel, the spirit of wisdom and might, the spirit of fear and love (of God), the spirit of prudence and temperance. He is adorned with the spirit of charity and mercy, the spirit of justice and piety, the spirit of gentleness and patience, which he has received from God three times more than He has given to all his creatures. O blessed time, when he shall come to the world. Believe me that I have seen him and have done him reverence, even as every prophet has seen him. Seeing that of his spirit God gives to them prophecy. And when I saw him my soul was filled with consolation, saying, O Muammed, God be with you, and may he make me worthy to untie your shoe latchet, for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and holy one of God." (The Gospel of Barnabas 44)

"... unworthy to untie your latchet" above brings to memory what St. Mark said in 1:7: "And this was his message: After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." The speaker is undoubtedly Jesus and the one whose coming he is predicting is none other than Prophet Muhammed ( ). But people look at things and make them appear as they would like them to. Such is the truth which all other disciples, with the exception of Barnabas, had deliberately hidden.

The reader is encouraged to obtain a copy of the Gospel of Saint Barnabas[1] and compare it with other existing Bibles, be they those accepted by the Catholics or those endorsed by the Protestants and judge for himself as to how much distortion the message of Christ has suffered and is still suffering...

The Catholic archbishop slipped into an obvious self-contradiction; for he on one hand sanctified the authors of the four gospels and held them above lying while, on the other hand, he admitted to the Imam that they did tell lies about Christ ( ).

Then the Imam ( ) debated with the High Rabbi, the most distinguished scholar of the Jews, to prove the prophethood of Prophet Muhammed ( ) from the previously revealed divine testaments, after which he follows with a very logical debate. Having argued with him that one of the requirements of a Prophet was to perform something all other creation are unable to perform, he asked him about the reason why they, the Jews, refrained from believing into the miracles of all prophets other than Moses ( ) son of Imran (Amram), and the High Rabbi answered him by saying, "We cannot admit the prophethood of any who professes prophethood except after bringing us knowledge similar to that brought by Moses." Al-Rida ( ) said to him, "Then how come you admitted the prophethood of other prophets who preceded Moses ( ) who did not split the sea, nor did they cleave the stones so that twelve springs would gush forth from it, nor did they take their hands out shining white as Moses did, nor did they turn a cane into a snake?!" It was then that the High Rabbi overcame his stubbornness, submitted to the argument, and admitted that any supernatural act beyond human capacity was indeed a proof of prophethood.

The Imam ( ) then asked him about the reason why the Jews did not believe in the prophethood of Jesus ( ) despite the fact that he brought forth miracles beyond human capacity such as bringing the dead back to life, healing those who were born blind and the lepers, and about the reason why they did not believe in the prophethood of Muhammed ( )

1 Since there is no copyright on The Gospel of Barnabas, the copy of it consulted for this book does not contain the Publisher's name nor the place nor the date of publication.

despite his bringing an extra-ordinary miracle, the Holy Qur'an, although he was neither a scholar nor a writer. The High Rabbi had no answer at all.

Then came the turn of the Zoroastrian high priest whom the Imam debated based on the priest's belief in the prophethood of Zoroaster. The Zoroastrian told the Imam (□) that Zoroaster brought them what no other man had ever brought them before. "We did not see him," he continued, "but the tales of our ancestors informed us that he legalized for us what no other person before had made legal; so, we followed him." The Imam (□) asked him, "You believed in the tales which came to you about him, so you followed him, didn't you?" "Yes," he answered. The Imam (□) said, "This is the case with all other nations. Tales came to them about what the prophets had accomplished, what Moses (□), Jesus (□), and Muhammed (□) had all brought them, so why did you not believe in any of these prophets, having believed in Zoroaster through the tales that came to you about him informing that he brought forth what others did not?" The Zoroastrian high priest had no more to say.

After that the Imam turned to the debate's witnesses, having finished debating with the chief representatives of those creeds, asking anyone else to go ahead and put forth any question to him. Everyone abstained from doing so. It was then that Imran the Sabian, who was one of the most distinguished scholars of the science of kalam of his time, approached the Imam (□) and asked him how he could prove the existence of the Creator. The discussion between them delved into the deepest depths of this complex question, while the Imam answered the man's questions through clear scientific facts in a very simple way. Among the questions Imran asked the Imam (□) was: "Master! Was the Being known to Himself by His Own Self?" The Imam said, "Knowledge is acquired by something which would negate its antithesis (ignorance). So that the thing itself would be existing through what it is negated, without the existence of anything which contradicts its existence, a need arises to negate that thing about itself by defining what is known about it. Do you understand, O Imran?" He said, "Yes, by Allah, master! Tell me, then, by what means did He come to know what He knew, by a pronoun or by something else?" The Imam (□)

said, “If it had been by a pronoun, would He then find anyway not to establish for that pronoun a limit where knowledge ends?” Imran answered, “Yes, He will have to find such a way.” The Imam asked him, “Then what is that pronoun?” Imran could not provide any answer. The Imam ( ) said, “Is it alright if I ask you about the pronoun and you define it by another pronoun? If you answer in the affirmative, then you would make both your claim and statement void. O Imran! Ought you not come to know that the One cannot be described by a pronoun and would not be described except by a verb, a deed, an action, and He cannot be expected to be parts and kinds like human beings?” Imran asked him, “Master! The knowledge I have says that the being is changed in his essence by his action of creating...” The Imam ( ) said, “Does your statement, O Imran, mean that the being does not in any way change its essence except when it affects its own essence in a way which changes it? O Imran! Can you say that the fire changes its own nature, or that the heat burns itself, or have you seen anyone seeing his own vision?” Imran said, “No, I have not seen that; could you please tell me, master, is it the creation, or is it the nature of creation?” The Imam ( ) said, “Yes, O Imran, He is above all of that; He is not in the creation, nor is the creation in Him; He is elevated above that, and bad indeed is your knowledge about Him, and there is no might except in Allah. Tell me about the mirror: are you in it or is it in you? If neither one of you is in the other, then how did you come to see your own reflection in it?” Imran said, “Through the light between myself and it.” The Imam ( ) said, “Can you see of that light more than what you can with your own eyes?” He answered, “Yes.” The Imam ( ) said to him, “Then show it to us...” It was then that the man was too baffled to say a word. The Imam ( ) said, “I do not see the light except leading you and the mirror to come to know each other without being in either one of you. There are many such examples which the ignorant simply cannot observe, and Allah Has the greatest example.”

Thus did the Imam face the challenge of Imran the Sabian’s doubting method, smashing it and dispelling the ambiguity of the complex doubts which he could not understand till vision became clear to him.

The Imam ( ) did not determine an evidence except after building it with simple, easy to understand, proofs derived from everyday life in order not to leave any room for the opponent to doubt after transforming a most complex theory into an easy and commonsense idea, all of that by employing a very beautiful and miraculously effective style.

In another session, al-Ma'mun invited the Imam ( ) to debate Sulayman al-Marazi, Khurasan's scientist in kalam, and the debate between them dealt with some significant topics which were being debated then by scholars of the science of kalam. The starting-point of the discussion was the issue of *bada'*. The Imam ( ) explained its sound meaning, indicating that the Sublime and Dear God had innermost knowledge which nobody but He knew: that was the source of *bada'* and the knowledge whereby He taught His angels and Prophets.

To explain it in a way which would remove all confusion and ambiguity, we can say about *bada'* is that Allah makes it clear that His Divine Will is always linked to an advantage, a benefit, that necessitates it, brings about such Will, carries it out..., whereas what is apparent is that His Will is hinging on what is opposite thereto. Then He, after that, makes manifest His actual Will when the advantage is satisfied from all aspects, and the reasons for which it was not previously manifested are removed, and it appears to the creation as if Allah willed to abandon His first Will, hence it is in the view of creation, not in the reality of Will, *bada'*. This is the theory of *bada'* in its simple logical context which Imamis (Shi'as) uphold and which some people misunderstood and misinterpreted, giving it a wrong meaning which necessitated attributing ignorance (!!!) to the Almighty God, an excuse to wage an unfair campaign of defamation against Imami Shi'as by their opponents from among the followers of other sects.

The Imam ( ) has proven the accuracy of *bada'* in which Ahl al-Bayt ( ) believe by: First quoting the Holy Qur'an where Allah Almighty

says, “So leave them alone, for you shall not be blamed for that,”[1] meaning thereby that He intends to annihilate them. Then the Almighty, according to the bada’ theory, says, “So remind (them), for (such) reminding may avail the believers,”[2] which indicates a shift from the first decision as observed from studying the context of both verses.
Second, he tries to prove it through traditions narrated from his forefathers citing the Messenger of Allah ( ) saying, “Allah sent his wahi to one of His prophets to inform him that he would die on a particular day, and when that prophet was told of it, he plead toed Allah, the King, while on his bed, and kept saying, Lord! Postpone my demise till I see my son growing up to carry out my will’ till he fell from his bed, whereupon Allah sent his wahi again to the same prophet to inform him that He decided to postpone it.”

It is apparent that bada’ in the meaning which we indicated requires no reason whatsoever to be alarmed, and it does not justify waging a campaign of defamation against those who believe in it by those who do not.
The same discussion led to discussing the will’s eternity and transience, and the Imam ( ) stood to disprove the theory which called for the eternity of the will, proving its being transient by revealing its self-contradiction, removing the confusion which may occupy anyone’s mind in its regard.

Will, as the Imam ( ) says, is one of the actions of the Almighty. It is not one of His attributes; therefore, it is transient, not perpetual, since an action is a form of event, and the deed cannot be identical to the doer, so the will cannot be identical to the willing person. Will is not like hearing, or seeing, or knowing as al-Marazi tried to prove; it does not make sense, the Imam says, to say that He “wanted” Himself. Does He want to be “something,” or does He want to be alive, Seeing, Hearing, or Able?! If this is according to His Will, it would require the impossible which is the change occurring to the self, for the meaning then would be that He wanted Himself to be something which was

1 Qur’an, Surat Al-Thariya:54.

2 Qur’an, Surat Al Thariyat:55.

not... Sublime is Allah greatly above all of this sophistry.

Thus did the debates between the Imam and al-Marazi take place frequently about the eternity of the will versus its transience with regard to relevant matters.

In his debates with the Imam (□), al-Marazi kept arguing and coming back to the same point from which he had started his argument in an inflexible argumentative manner. While accepting that to desire something (to "will", to wish, to desire, to decide) is a verb, he goes back to deny that, claiming that it is an adjective, and he may admit something and say something else.

The Imam asked him, "O Abu Sulayman! Can you tell me if the will is a verb or not?" He said, "Yes, it is a verb." The Imam (□) asked him, "Is it causative, since verbs are?" "It is not a verb," came the answer. The Imam (□) asked him, "Is there anyone besides Him who, too, is eternal?" Sulayman answered, "Willing is doing." The Imam (□) said, "O Sulayman! This is the same (sophistry) because of which you criticized Dirar and his followers, saying that everything Allah Almighty has created in His heavens and earth, ocean or land, dog or pig, monkey, human, or an animal, is Allah's will, and that Allah's will gives life and takes life away, and it goes here or drinks from there, marries, enjoys food, commits immoral acts, disbelieves and commits shirk..." Sulayman said, "It is like hearing, seeing, or knowing; that is, it is an adjective, an attribute." Having abstained from providing an answer to the Imam's question, Sulayman went back to the beginning of the argument regarding whether the will is an adjective, an attribute, or a verb, but the Imam nevertheless repeated his argument with him by following another route different from the one he took first. This indicates how commonsense the idea seems to him and demonstrates his ability to prove it however he willed.

The debate continued between them in the same calm manner in which the Imam (□) coined his questions, which is the most magnificent method of debate. In his way of providing answers, the Imam never blocked the avenue before his opponent to continue the debate; rather, he left him completely free to debate in whatever manner he wished

through his questions till he brought him to a dead-end where he could not proceed anymore just to go back to seek another route which the Imam himself wanted him to seek out of his own will, and after his own conviction.

But Sulayman kept fumbling about in his answers to the Imam's questions after the Imam had closed before him all avenues of argument, and al-Ma'mun was quick to notice his fumbling about which indicated Sulayman's loss, so he rebuked the latter and criticized him. It is reported that during the debate, when al-Rida ( ) asked him to continue his questions, he said, "Will is one of His attributes." The Imam said, "How many times have you said that it is one of His attributes?! Is it a new attribute, or has it always been so?" Sulayman said, "New." The Imam ( ) said, "Allahu Akbar! You are telling me that His attribute is new! Had it been one of His attributes, an eternal one, then He willed and He created as long as His will and His creation are eternal...! This means it is an attribute of someone who did not know what he did! Allah is Elevated above this..." Sulayman said, "Things are not a will, and He did not will anything." Here the Imam said, "You have hissed, O Sulayman! He did and He created as long as His will and His creation are eternal...?! This is the attribute of someone who does not know what he is doing! Elevated is Allah above all of that." Turning to al-Ma'mun, Sulayman then said, "Master! I have already informed him that it is like hearing and seeing and knowing." Al-Ma'mun said, "Woe unto you, Sulayman! How you have erred and how often you have repeated yourself! Stop it and take another route, for you seem to be unable to provide any answer better than that."

The debate continued after that till Sulayman's tongue was tied, whereupon al-Ma'mun said, "O Sulayman! This is the most learned descendant of Hashim," and the session was terminated.

The Imam ( ) also conducted a very magnificent debate with Ali ibn al-Jahm dealing with the infallibility of prophets in which he explained in a very beautiful way. He underscored the fact that the superficial meaning of some verses may give the impression of self-contradiction. The Imam ( ) started his discussion with Ali ibn al-Jahm by criticizing him and those who interpreted the Book of Allah according to their

own viewpoints, stating that he and those folks have to refer to those whom Allah endowed with the faculty of knowledge and understanding in order to learn the actual and accurate interpretation of such verses. This is according to the sacred verse which says, "And none knows its interpretation except Allah and those deeply grounded in knowledge" (Qur'an, Ali Imran:7). Then the Imam ( ) started explaining the verses whose superficial meaning indicates the fallibility and possibility of sinning by prophets. He indicated that Adam's transgression took place while he was in Paradise, not on earth, and the infallibility in question is earthly, and that he did not commit any sinning act as long as he lived on earth which contradicted his infallibility as proven by the following sacred verse: "Allah did indeed choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran above all people" (Qur'an, Ali Imran:33). As regarding the verse which states the following: "And remember Thun-nan when he departed in wrath; he imagined that We had no power over him, but he cried through the depths of darkness, There is no God but You! Glory to You; I was indeed wrong"(Qur'an, Al Anbiya':87), what is meant by "he imagined that We had no power over him" is that he realized that Allah was not going to sustain him." Had he thought that Allah was unable to overpower him, he would have then committed kufr (apostasy) and he would have also committed *'isyan*, transgression.

As regarding the verse "And (with passionate lust) did she desire him, and he would have desired her" (Qur'an, Yousuf:24), the case regarding what the wife of al-'Aziz wanted, and what Yousuf ( ) desired to do, are two different things, for she wanted to commit a sin while he desired to kill her if she forced him; therefore, Allah saved him from the deed of killing her and its terrible consequences, and saved her from her own wishful desire to commit a sin.

As regarding prophet David ( ), his statement that the defendant had committed injustice by asking for the ewe, it was an error only within the framework of the case, and it took place before he had asked the defendant about his defense against the plaintiff's claim, and it is not a transgression, for Allah corrected his decision for him by bringing him the example of the two kings. As regarding his marriage with the widow of Uryah, which was regarded by people at that time as a sin

and criticized him for it, it was done for the sake of effecting a legislative interest whereby David wanted to shatter the then prevalent custom of a widow not getting married after the death of her husband. It is similar to what happened to the Prophet with Zainab daughter of Jahsh, wife of Zaid ibn Harithah who had been adopted by the Prophet ( ). The Prophet ( ), by marrying Zainab after granting her divorce from Zaid, wanted to shatter the pre-Islamic custom whereby a man would not be permitted to marry the former wife of someone whom he had adopted, as is clear in the text of the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet ( ) was apprehensive of the criticism of the hypocrites of his action, so the Almighty addressed him by saying, "Do not fear people; it is more fitting that you should fear Allah" (Qur'an, Al Ahzab:37), since it was Allah Who ordered him to marry her as we understand from the verse, "Then when Zaid had dissolved (his marriage) with her, with the necessary (formality), We joined her in marriage to you in order that (henceforth) there will be no difficulty to the believers in (the matter of) marrying the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality, their marriage) with them, and Allah's command must be fulfilled" (Qur'an, Al Ahzab:37).

By providing such glorious knowledge of the exegesis of sacred Qur'anic verses, and by giving such honest interpretations which safeguard the integrity of the context, the Imam ( ) used to dispel the confusion of those who did not have a deep actual understanding of the Glorious Book of Allah.

In his book *Al-'Iqd al-Farid*, Ibn Abd Rabbih al-Andalusi recorded a debate on the subject of Imamate between the Imam and caliph al-Ma'mun which seems to be stamped with artificiality, and we think it is possible that some fanatics from among those who deviated from the line of the Ahl al-Bayt ( ) had fabricated it, for he stated the following in his book:

Al-Ma'mun said to Ali ibn Musa ( ), "Why do you claim it (Imamate) for your own selves?" The Imam ( ) answered, "Due to Ali and Fatima ( ) being near in kin to the Messenger of Allah ( )." Al-Ma'mun said, "If it is only a matter of kinship, then the Messenger of Allah ( ) had left behind him those who were closer in kinship to him

than Ali or any of his relatives, and if you mean the kinship of Fatima ( ) to the Messenger of Allah ( ), then the matter (Imamate) after her should have belonged to al-Hasan and al-Husain ( ) whose right was confiscated by Ali even while they were still alive, taking control of what was not his." Ali ibn Musa (al-Rida [ ]) could not provide an answer.

Let us record the following regarding this quotation:

The Imam did not claim his right to caliphate only on account of his kinship to the Prophet ( ), but rather on account of the clear statements made by the Prophet ( ) emphasizing that he was to be the caliph after him, in addition to the personal qualifications which adorned Imam Ali ( ) and which distinguished him above the rest of *sahaba*.

The concept of caliphate according to Ahl al-Bayt ( ) is that it is decreed according to a divine text, not dictated due to factors of kinship, politics, etc. Allah is the One Who chooses, and His choice is conveyed by His Prophet ( ), whoever He sees to be most fit to safeguard the Message and the interest of the nation. The claim of those who said that they deserved caliphate due to their kinship to the Prophet ( ) is similar to the claim of those who said that the muhajiran (immigrants) were more qualified than the ansar (supporters of Medina) due to the nearness of the first party to the Messenger of Allah ( ). The Imam, if this story is true at all, would not have been unable, as it suggests, to answer al-Ma'mun's objection that there are among the Ahl al-Bayt ( ) those who had more priority than Ali ( ) or any of his relatives, an apparent reference to his grandfather al-Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib[1], to caliphate. It was al-Abbas himself who approached the Imam requesting him to stretch his hand to him so that he would swear the oath of allegiance to him when he felt that the fate looked ominous and that the environment was threatening of a revolt. But the Imam refused to accept such an oath privately; rather, he preferred that such

1 This is a direct reference to the Abbasides who regarded themselves as more worthy of ruling the Muslims than all others although they proved to be among the very worst who ever ruled the Islamic nation. The title of the founder of their government, namely "al-Saffah," which means "the blood-shedder," says it all.

an oath be sworn to him in public and before eye witnesses after finishing the funeral rites for the Messenger of Allah ( ) whose corpse was still lying in state waiting to be bathed and buried[1]. If you suppose that al-Abbas had any right to the caliphate, he would then have relinquished it.

As regarding al-Hasan and al-Husain, they were then very young; Hasan was 10 and Husain was 9. Neither wilayat nor wisayat can be enforced on caliphate till they were old enough, for caliphate is a post which permits no wisayat at all; therefore, the issue of caliphate was confined to Ali ( ) alone.

The fact that al-Ma'mun's way of thinking regarding the issue of caliphate, and his views with which he confronted the faqihs in his debates, as the author of *Al-'Iqd al-Farid* himself mentions, proving that caliphate was the legitimate right of only Ali rather than anyone else among the sahaba, this fact itself convinces us that this fabricated dialogue quoted above was written by some fanatic followers of other sects.

Imam al-Rida ( ) did not write a book on exegesis, but he explained the meanings of the Qur'anic verses about which he was asked, and we will indicate here some such explanations in order to acquaint you with the magnificent method and innovative style of the Imam ( ) in this regard.
Al-Ma'mun asked him once to explain some Qur'anic verses out of his curiosity about the knowledge which Allah bestowed upon the Imam ( ). Among such verses was this one: "He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His throne was over the water, so that He might try you which of you is best in conduct" (Qur'an, Hud:7). He said, "The Praised and Exalted Allah created the Throne, the water, and the angels before the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the angels used to know Allah through their own creation,

1 The very fact that the so-called "election" of the first caliph, Abu Bakr, took place at Saqafat Bana Saida before the Prophet (ص) had been buried opens the eyes even of the blind to the fact that those who were involved in such "election" masquerade were more concerned about power and politics than about burying the corpse of their Prophet (ص).

through the Throne and the water. Then He made His Throne over the water in order to manifest His might to the angels so that they might know that He is capable of doing whatever He pleased. Then He raised the Throne through His might, moved it and made it above the seven heavens. Then He created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time. He was capable of creating them in a twinkle of the eye, but the Exalted One created them in six periods in order to show the angels what He was creating, one creation after another, so that they would know time, and so that they would again know that Allah was the absolute Originator of each and every thing. Allah did not create the Throne because He was and is independent of it and of everything He created; He cannot be described by anything in the cosmos simply because He has no physical body; Exalted is He above the characteristics of what He created a great deal of Exaltation.

"As regarding His saying, ...so that He might try you which of you is best in conduct,' He has created them in order to test them through the responsibility of obeying and worshipping Him, not out of His desire to test or to try them, since He already knows all things."

Al-Ma'mun also asked him about the meaning of this verse: "Had it been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, (so would have) all those on earth! Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?! No soul can believe except by the Will of Allah" (Qur'an, Younus:99-100). Quoting his forefathers, al-Rida ( ) said, "Muslims said to the Messenger of Allah ( ), We wish you forced those whom you have conquered, O Messenger of Allah, to accept Islam, so that our number would increase, and we would become stronger in the face of our enemies.' The Messenger of Allah ( ) said, I am not going to meet Allah, the Almighty and the Exalted, having invented an innovation which He did not command me to do, nor am I the type of person who forces others to do anything at all.' It was then that this verse was revealed: Had it been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, (so would have) all those on earth,' by means of forcing them, or when they find no other choice while in this world, just as will those who will believe only after witnessing Allah's might and retribution in the life after death. If I do such a thing to them, they would not deserve any reward, but I wish they accept it out of their own choice rather than

being forced to do so in order that they may deserve to be close to me and blessed through me, and they will thus remain in Paradise forever.'
"As regarding the meaning of No soul can believe except by the Will of Allah,' it does not mean that it is prohibited from believing (without a prior consent from Allah); it simply means that Allah invites it to believe without forcing it to do so."

The Imam ( ) said the following in his explanation of the verse which says, "[Allah is He] Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy" (Qur'an, Al-Baqara:22): "He made the earth suitable to the creation of your nature, agreeable to your bodies; He did not make it too hot to burn you, nor too cold to freeze you, nor too windy to cause you dizziness, nor too stinky to damage your heads, nor as liquid as water to cause you to drown, nor too solid to enable you to build houses and graves for your dead; rather, the Exalted and the Sublime One made it strong enough to be useful for you, for your bodies, and for your buildings, making it usable in your homes and graves and a great deal of other advantages as well; thus, He made the earth a couch for you.

"As for the heavens, He made them like a protective ceiling above your heads in which He let the sun and its moon and the stars orbit for your own good. He ... 'sent down water from the heavens, and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance,' meaning thereby water which He caused to descend from a high altitude in order to reach the summits of your mountains and hills, valleys and plains. He caused it to descend as showers and as moisture which soil inhales, and He did not cause it to pour down at once to ruin your lands, trees and other vegetation and fruits. And brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance' (Qur'an, Al-Baqara:22) means whatever grows on earth for your sustenance, so Do not set up rivals unto Allah while you know (the truth),' that is, rivals' such as similitudes and such things like idols which have no comprehension, hearing, sight, nor are they able to do anything at all, while you know that they cannot create any of these great blessings with which He, your Lord, the Exalted, the Most High, has blessed you."

About the subject of the infallibility of Prophets, the Imam ( ) was

asked to explain the meanings of some verses whose superficial meanings suggest that Prophets were not infallible at all, that they were liable to commit sins. At one of the meetings arranged by al-Ma'mun, the latter asked the Imam (□): “O Son of the Messenger of Allah (□)! Don’t you claim that Prophets are infallible?” The Imam (□) answered in the affirmative. Al-Ma'mun then asked him, “Then what is the meaning of this verse: Thus did Adam disobey his Lord and allow himself to be seduced’?” The Imam answered this question by explaining that Allah had forbidden Adam and Eve from coming close to a particular tree without forbidding them from eating its fruit or the fruit of similar trees. They obeyed Allah by not coming near that tree, but Iblis (Eblis) confused them in this regard and suggested that they should eat not from that tree but from other similar trees, swearing to them by Allah that he was only providing them with advice. So they believed in his oath, and they ate the fruit of a similar tree, and that was before Adam was considered as a Prophet and before his descent to earth. What he did was not a sin for which the penalty is Hellfire, but it was a minor disobedience which could be forgiven and could be committed by Prophets before wahi (revelation) reaches them. When Allah chose him and made him a Prophet, he became infallible and was not permitted to commit a sin, minor or major, telling him, “Thus did Adam disobey his Lord and allow himself to be seduced. But his Lord chose him (for His Grace); He turned to him, and gave him guidance.’” Then he asked him about Ibrahim (Abraham) al-Khalil (□), the Friend of Allah, and about the stage of doubt through which he passed as appears on the surface in the Holy Qur’an when he is mentioned, till truth became manifest to him and he believed therein. The Almighty says, “When the night covered him, he saw a star. He said, This is my Lord.’ But when it set, he said, I do not love those that set.’ When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said, This is my Lord.’ But the moon set, so he said, Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.’ When he saw the sun rising in splendour, he said, This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).’ But when the sun set, he said, O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of ascribing partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face firmly and truly towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I attribue partners to Allah’” (Qur’an, Al An’am:76-79). About this issue, the Imam (□) commented thus:

“Ibrahim ( ) never passed through a stage of doubt in Allah; rather, his story may be summarized thus: He lived in a society where three types of worship dominated: the worship of Venus, the worship of the moon, and the worship of the sun. The outward pretense of Ibrahim ( ) to follow these religions before declaring his belief in Allah was only to deny the validity of each one of them and to prove to others the fact that they were invalid, not due to his temporary belief in them. He simply wanted to prove to their fellows, through the method of argument which he employed in a spirit filled with belief in Him, that their type of creed and their norm of worship of Venus, the moon, and the sun, were not appropriate due to the variation which occurred to them and which is one of the attributes of the creatures, not of the Creator.”

Then the Imam ( ) added saying, “What Ibrahim al-Khalil ( ) did was actually according to the inspiration which he had received from Allah by the token of the verse that says, That was the reasoning about Us which We gave to Abraham (to employ) against his people’ (Qur’an, Al-An’am:83). What he did, therefore, was merely a method to win the argument against his people regarding the invalidity of their norms of worship and in their belief in gods other than Allah, which is a unique method among Qur’anic methods to invite others to believe.”

Al-Ma'mun then asked him about the meaning of the verse which says, “... till the apostles give up hope (of their people) and (their people come to) think that they proved them to be liars, Our help will then come to them” (Qur’an, Yousuf:110). The reason for questioning is attributing despair to Allah’s Messengers after being promised help from Allah. Despair and despondency are forms of kufr (disbelief); the Almighty has said, “Never give up hope of Allah’s mercy; truly none despairs of Allah’s mercy except those who have no faith” (Qur’an, Yousuf:87). So, how can despair find its way to the heart of a messenger of Allah, or a prophet, knowing that, according to this verse, only kafirs can do so, and what is a greater sin than committing *kufr*?!

What is superficially obvious from the text of this verse is that the time when they despaired was after receiving the Message and inspiration.

To this, the Imam ( ) answered by saying that the subject of despair in this verse is not Allah's help promised to His messengers, but rather losing hope of their people ever believing in them and accepting their message; i.e. to believe in Him and renounce their previous disbelief and disobedience by their worship of gods other than Allah. The meaning of this verse, then, will be something like this: When the messengers lost hope that their people would ever believe in them, and when those people thought that they succeeded in proving those messengers liars, it is then that Our help came to them.
Thus is the outward ambiguity of the verse removed, and thus does the Imam ( ), through providing such glorious explanations to the sacred verses of the Holy Qur'an whose outward meaning is actually the opposite of that of the context, dispel the cloud of doubt which may come to one's mind regarding the infallibility of Prophets. They are not mere justifications or one's own personal opinions; rather, they are actual facts; to uphold to the contrary is not possible.

There are other verses the superficial meaning of which gives the impression that Allah has limbs just as humans do which He uses to achieve His purpose. An example is His statement addressing Iblis when the latter refused to prostrate to Adam as commanded by Allah: "What prohibited you from prostrating to what I have created with My own hands?" and also the verse saying, "When a leg will be uncovered and they are invited to prostrate..."

The Imam ( ) explains the meaning of Allah's hand to be His might. The meaning of the previous verse would be, "What prohibited you from prostrating to what I have created with My might and power?" Allah does not have eyes, legs, hands, or any such things as we may imagine which would put limits to Allah like those to man, and the revealed texts containing a reference to such things are given meanings which agree with conceiving Allah to be Exalted above having physical dimensions a great deal of exaltation.

The "leg" is interpreted by the Imam as a barrier of light which, when removed, will cause the believers to fall prostrating, while the legs of the hypocrites become too stiffened to prostrate.

Thus does Imam al-Rida ( ) portray for us an accurate picture which is honest in interpreting the meanings embedded in the Glorious Book if we wish to honestly and wisely interpret its verses.

One more thing remains. There are narratives which contain some interpretations of Qur'anic verses attributed to Imam al-Rida ( ) the authenticity of which is questioned simply because some of those who reported them are not free of the practice of distortion or fabrication. What we feel comfortable with is: if such narrations do not contain anything which disagrees with the beliefs of followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ( ) regarding the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, it will be a testimony to their authenticity. Add to this the fact that we think it is quite unlikely that some narrators would deliberately tell lies about the Imam ( ) in cases where telling lies does not benefit the narrator a bit, particularly in the interpretations of the verses which we have quoted above. This is why we find scholars of exegesis rely on such narratives and their likes in explaining the Holy Qur'an. If they contradict one another, they accept the one which seems to have the most sound meaning, or to the ones which agree with the basic principles of the School of Thought.

In the case where the interpretation of certain verses becomes the basis of a legislative rule, or in the process of deriving one, then the authenticity of narration or interpretation has to be verified first as one provided by the Prophet ( ) or by members of his Ahl al-Bayt ( ), and attempts should be made to make sure that the integrity of their narrators is not questioned.

Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib ( ) justifies the existence of Qur'anic verses which can be interpreted in more than one way by saying, "The Almighty has done so in order to foil the attempt of wrong-doers from among those who would take control over the legacy of the knowledge of the Book left by the Messenger of Allah ( ), which he did not intend them to acquire, rendering them unable to explain the various possible meanings thereof." It is as if Allah willed that the Prophet ( ) and those who would bear the Message after him would have a special distinction which is: the understanding of what others are not able to understand, so that people would resort to them

when they are unable to understand certain verses of the Holy Qur'an which they need to understand for the betterment of their life and the comprehension of their creed.

The Imam's answers to theological questions were all in harmony with the environment of the occasion surrounding their legislation. Causes may be to achieve a social benefit, when the social aspect of legislation is more apparent than any other, or for a health-related, spiritual or psychological benefit. For example, when he explains the causes for the prohibition of adultery, the Imam ( ) says, "Adultery is prohibited due to the corruption it causes such as murders, loss of lineage, child desertion, chaos regarding inheritance, and other such aspects of corruption." The Imam ( ) explains to us why usury (riba) is prohibited by saying, "The reason for prohibiting usury is because it eliminates favours, ruins funds, causes greed for profit, causes people to abandon their dealing with loans to each other or in paying with cash, or when they do each other favours, and due to all the bad consequences of corruption and oppression and the exhaustion of funds."

As regarding the prohibition of eating the meat of pigs, rabbits, dead animals, spleens, the Imam ( ) says, "As regarding pigs, their creation was distorted by Allah in order to provide a moral lesson to man, and in order to remind man to fear Allah, and as an evidence of Allah's might to distort what He creates at will, and because the food they eat is the filthiest of filth, in addition to many other reasons. As regarding the rabbits, they are like cats: Their claws are like those of cats and like wild animals. Their behaviour, therefore, is equally wild, in addition to their own inner dirtiness and due to their bleeding which is similar to the bleeding of women during their menstrual period because they are miscreants. As regarding dead animals, the prohibition of eating their meat is due to the damage such meat will cause to the body, and due to the fact that Allah has made lawful the meat of animals slaughtered in His name so that that would be a distinction between what is lawful and what is not. As regarding the spleen, it is prohibited because of the bad blood it contains, and the cause of its prohibition is similar to that of dead animals; it is equally bad in its consequences."

The Imam ( ) has said the following regarding the legislation of the pilgrimage (*hajj*): "The reason for the hajj is to seek to be the guest of Allah, to request more blessings, to part with past sins, to feel repentant about the past, and to look forward to the future. It is due to spending on the trip seeking nearness to Allah, tiring the body, abstaining from pleasures and desires, seeking nearness to Allah by worshipping Him, yielding and submitting to Him, looking up towards Him in cases of hot weather and chilling cold, during security and fear, incessantly doing so, and due to all the benefits in it of desiring the rewards and fearing the wrath of Allah, the Dear One, the Exalted."

As regarding marital relations between man and woman, the Imam ( ) justifies for us some legislative rules in this regard. For example, the reason why a man may marry up to four women, while a woman is prohibited from marrying more than one man, is that when a man marries four women, his children will all be related to him; had a woman married two husbands or more simultaneously, nobody would know for sure who fathered the sons she gave birth to, since they all were in cohabiting with her, and this causes a complete disorder for relating one to his father, and who should inherit who, and who is the kin of who.

The reason for repeating the divorce statement thrice is due to the time interval between each, and due to a possible desire for reconciliation or the calming of anger, if any, and to teach women to respect their husbands and deter them from disobeying them.

The reason why a husband can never remarry his wife whom he divorced thrice (articulating, in the process, the divorce statement nine times all in all), is that it is his right penalty so that men do not take divorce lightly or take advantage of women and think of them as weak, and so that the man would be considering his affairs, remaining awake and aware, so that he would lose all hope of a reunion after the ninth pronouncement of the divorce statement. The reason why a wife during her waiting period (iddat) cannot remarry her previous husband who had divorced her twice till she marries someone else, is due to the fact that Allah had permitted divorce twice, saying, "A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold together on

equitable terms, or separate with kindness,"[1] that is, after he had already divorced her for the third time, due to his committing something which Allah Almighty hates for him to do; therefore, He prohibited him from marrying her again except after she marries someone else in order to prohibit people from taking divorce lightly and in order to protect women's rights.

Regarding the monetary distribution of inheritance by allotting the male heir twice the share of that of the female, the Imam ( ) says the following: "The reason for giving women half what men get of inheritance is that when the woman marries, she receives, while the man gives; therefore, Allah decided to assist the males to be able to give."

He provides another reason why the man is given twice as much as the woman: The woman is considered dependent on the man when she needs, and he has to take care of her living expenses and to spend on her, while the woman is not required to take care of the expenses of the man, nor can she be required to pay his expenses if he was in need; therefore, Allah decreed to give the man more according to the Qur'anic verse, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given the one more than the other, and because they support them from their means."[2]

Regarding the common custom of defining the value of the dower to be equivalent to the value of five hundred dirhams, the Imam ( ) says in a narrative: "Allah the Almighty and the Exalted has promised that if one believer pronounced *Allahu Akbar!* one hundred times, and *Subhana-Allah* one hundred times, and *Alhamdu-Lillah* one hundred times, and *La Ilaha Ila-Allah* one hundred more times, and send blessings unto His Prophet ( ) yet a hundred more, then he pleads to Him to grant him in marriage the huris of Paradise with large lovely eyes, He would surely marry him to one, then He determined women's dowers to be five hundred dirhams. If any believer asks the hand of a woman from

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1 Qur'an, Surat Al-Baqarah:229.

2 Qur'an, Surat Al-Nisa':34.

another Muslim brother, pays him the five hundred dirhams, and the brother does not marry him to that woman, he would have committed ‘uqooq (disobedience of Allah’s commandments) towards him, and Allah will not marry him to a huri.”

The hadith of Imam al-Rida (□) contains precious jewels and invaluable treasures in which man senses the depth of the idea, the magnificence of tafsir, the beauty of performance, with neither the artificial manner of expression, nor the ambiguity of meaning, nor the stubbornness of instruction. When he is asked about the reasonable comprehension of some ahadith of the Prophet (□) in which a cloud of ambiguity hovers above their narration, he defines their actual objective with flexibility and ease, as if hadith has no other connotation except the one he provides.

Some people asked him (□) about the meaning of this tradition: “My companions are like the stars: If you follow any of them, you shall receive guidance,” and another one saying, “Leave my companions to me.” Both of these traditions are considered by Sunnis as the foundation of their generalization of judgement regarding all companions of the Prophet (□) barring none, thus justifying even their acts which contradicted Islamic justice, calling what they could not justify as “an error in ijtihad.” But the Imam (□) provides us with the actual explanation of these and other such ahadith with honesty and integrity, outlining in an easy manner their exact meaning. In his answer regarding the first tradition, he said, “Yes; he did say this hadith, meaning thereby the companions who did not make any alteration after him or any change (to the Islamic creed).” He was asked, “How can you tell that they altered and changed?” He said, “This is due to what is reported about him (□) that he said, Certain individuals among my companions will be pushed away by force from my Pool (of Kawthar) on the Day of Judgement just as strange camels are pushed away from the watering place, and I shall cry, O Lord! My companions! My companions!’ and it shall be said to me, You do not know what innovations they invented after you,’ so they will be pushed away towards the left side (where Hell is), and I shall say, Away with them; ruined they shall be.’” The Imam continued to say, “Such will be the penalty of those who alter and change (the *hadith* and the Sunnah).”

This *hadith* is narrated, with a minor variation in its wording, by al-Bukhari who quotes Abdullah ibn Mas'ud citing the Prophet (□) saying, "I shall be the first to reach the Pool, then the souls of some men from among you will be resurrected and they shall be prohibited from coming near me, and I shall say, Lord! These are my companions!' And it shall be said to me, You do not know what they did after you..."'[1] A number of huffaz and narrators of hadith reported this tradition in various wordings which maintained the same contextual meaning, proving thus that it is consecutively reported.

The Imam (□), through his frank and proven answer, saved us the effort to look for lame excuses for the flagrant transgressions in which a number of the sahaba fell, and from far-fetched artificialities to justify the errors of conduct which they deliberately committed with determination and which the same *huffaz* could not justify except by saying that they were cases of "mistaken ijtihad" which, according to them, did not contradict the justice expected of them, having been pressed by their attempt to attribute absolute justice to the sahabi no matter what he did...!

A companion (*sahabi*) of the Prophet (□) who was distinguished with the honour of being so close to the Prophet (□) is the custodian over the fruits of the Message and the protector of its structure through his faith and deeds. He is a man who ought to be taken as a role model of conduct. He is a man, as the Imam (□) used to say, who does not alter or change any of the statements of the Prophet (□). As regarding those who altered and changed, these cannot be awarded a unique distinction, just because they were companions of the Prophet (□), which raised their status above that of other Muslims simply because they were not up to par with the level of responsibility of being honest, which is expected of them, to carry out after the demise of the Prophet (□) and the cessation of *wahi* (divine inspiration).

The *hadith* which the Imam (□) narrated about Ibn Mas'ud, and which is recorded by a number of those who learned the Holy Qur'an and hadith by heart in their books, is considered as an explanation of this

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1 *al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 8, p. 119, Amari edition.*

hadith and of its connotation. Moreover, it puts the sahaba on equal footing with the others in subjecting their behaviour to criticism and discussion, and it shatters the self-immunity which was granted to them in accordance with alleged Prophetic "statements" actually fabricated by a number of *huffaz* and traditionists without permitting themselves or others to discuss but take for granted.

In another hadith, the Imam ( ) proves to us, through a clear tradition by the Prophet ( ), that some individuals who were regarded as sahaba were not actually so, which shatters all the excuses used to justify the mistakes and the transgression committed by them. For example, Muhammed ibn Ishaq al-Taliqani reported that a man in Khurasan swore by divorce that Mu'awiyah was not among the true companions of the Messenger of Allah ( ), and this happened when Imam al-Rida ( ) was present there. The jurists there issued their verdict that the man had actually divorced his wife, and the Imam ( ) was asked to provide his own opinion in this regard. He decided that the man's wife was not divorced; therefore, those jurists wrote a statement and sent it to him. In it, they asked him, "How did you come to say, O son of the Messenger of Allah ( ), that the woman was not to be divorced?" He wrote down on the same sheet saying, "It is so because of what you yourselves narrate from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri who quotes the Messenger of Allah ( ) saying about those who accepted Islam on the day of conquering Mecca, that is, Friday, the 20th of the month of Ramadan, 8 A.H., corresponding to January 14, 630 A.D., when he was surrounded by a large number of people, You are good; my companions are good; and there shall be no migration after this Fath (conquest),' without including these (meaning Mu'awiyah) among his companions." The jurists had to adopt the decision of the Imam ( ).

Thus did the Imam ( ) deny that Mu'awiyah was a companion of the Prophet ( ). Such a claim used to surround this man with a halo of sanctity and was used to justify the very serious transgressions which he committed. Such transgressions left their terrible marks on the structure of the Islamic government since then. They justified such transgressions by saying that he was a sahabi, and that, as such, whatever he did or said could not possibly cast a doubt about his integrity, adding, "If we see the good aspect of his action missing, we

may say that he attempted *ijtihad*, and he erred," even if such error was at the expense of the Prophet's Message itself...!

If we accept this argument, we would be justifying all the transgressions and erroneous behaviour of some companions of the Prophet ( ) regardless of their motives or horrible consequences. The transgressions of Mu'awiyah and his norms of conduct, in which he departed from the line of the Islamic Message altogether, and which agreed with the attitude of animosity towards Islam, and whose motives and impulses were to cast doubts and suspicions, nobody is really obligated to defend and describe as within the Islamic Shari'a simply because they were the result of an erroneous ijtihad wherein the mujtahid is rewarded with one reward, due to his "immunity" which does not include Mu'awiyah simply because the latter was not a companion of the Prophet ( ) but was just like any other Muslim whose conduct was subject to accountability and criticism, and the verdict in his regard is based on the anticipated results of his deeds.

The directive which the Imam ( ) intended by denying that those who accepted Islam, including Mu'awiyah, were not all companions of the Prophet on the day when Mecca was conquered, is one of the strongest and deepest of his directives, for he drew a line between the Prophet ( ) and his true companions on one hand, and those who accepted Islam after the conquest of Mecca and under the pressure of a superior power and authority on the other. Had it not been for their reaction to the precarious situation versus the might of their opponent, realizing that they had no choice except to make asylum and submit to the word of Islam, they would have otherwise dealt with Islam in a quite different manner...

Al-Ma'mun once asked the Imam ( ) why the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ( ) is called the divider of Paradise and of Hell, and how that attribute came to be applied to him. The Imam ( ) in turn asked him, "O commander of the faithful! Have you not narrated from your father from his forefathers quoting Abdullah ibn Abbas saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allah ( ) saying, Loving Ali ( ) is iman, and hating him is *kufr*?"" Al-Ma'mun answered in the affirmative, so the Imam ( ) said, "If the distribution of Paradise and

of Hell is done according to loving or hating him, then he is the distributor of Paradise and of Hell." Al-Ma'mun then said, "May Allah never permit me to live after your demise, O father of al-Hasan! I testify that you are the heir of the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah ( ).”

Abul-Salt al-Harawi said, "After the Imam ( ) had gone back home, I came to visit him, and I said to him, O son of the Messenger of Allah! What an excellent answer you have given the commander of the faithful!' He said, O Abul-Salt! I spoke to him in the way he understood best, and I have heard my father telling hadith from his forefathers about Ali ( ) saying, The Messenger of Allah ( ) said, O Ali! You are the distributor of Paradise and of Hell on the Day of Judgement; you say to Hell: This is mine, and that is yours...'"

In another narrative, he asked the Imam ( ) about the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ( ) as to why he did not restore Fadak to its rightful owners after becoming the caliph. He answered him by saying, "We are members of a family who, upon becoming rulers, do not take their rights from those who confiscated them. Should we become in charge of the Muslims, we shall rule them and restore their confiscated rights to them, but we do not do so for our own selves."

Fadak remained the symbol of the lost justice according to the Ahl al-Bayt ( ); for al-Zamakhshari says the following in his great book titled *Rab'i' al-Abrar*: "Harun ar-Rashid kept pressing Musa ibn Ja'far ( ) to take Fadak back, and he kept refusing. When he insisted that he should, he said, "I shall not take it back except in its boundaries." He asked him, "And what are its boundaries?" He said, "The first is Aden;" ar-Rashid 's face changed colour, yet he asked him, "And what is the second boundary?"' He said, "Samarkand;" now his face started shaking in anger. He asked him, "And what is the third boundary?" He said, "Africa;" and the caliph's face now turned black in outrage, yet he asked him, "And what is the fourth boundary?" He said, "The ocean, and whatever lies beyond the Caspian Sea and Armenia." Harun ar-Rashid then said, "There is nothing left for us; so, come and take my throne as well!" The Imam ( ) said, "I had told you before that if I defined its boundaries, you would refuse to give it back to me."

From this dialogue between Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (□) and Harun ar-Rashid , we can comprehend the vast dimension of the significance of Fadak to Ahl al-Bayt (□), and that it did not represent simply a piece of land and a few palm trees but a big missionary objective whose significance was linked to the significance of the Message itself in its connotation and depth.

Another person asked him about the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (□) as to why people deserted him after knowing his distinction, his past feats, and the status he enjoyed in the eyes of the Messenger of Allah (□). He answered, "They deserted him and preferred others over him after having come to know his merits simply because he had killed a great number of their fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, and other relatives who defied Allah and His Messenger (□); therefore, they kept their grudge against him inside their hearts and they did not like it when he became their ruler. They did not have grudge against anyone else as much as they had against him, for nobody else was so forceful in making jihad in the defense of the Messenger of Allah (□) as much as he was; so, they deserted him for someone else."

The Prophet (□) realized the seriousness of Ali's stand, the difficulty of the situation after his demise, and the dire consequences awaiting him due to his firm jihad in the Cause of Allah. The statements he (□) made regarding Ali (□), therefore, were meant to deter those who were waiting for a chance to get even with him. Had they not been veiled by grudges, and by his own glorious past, they would have been described as the beginning of the tragedy of justice and righteousness.

We cannot find a better explanation for the change in public opinion regarding Ali's stand after the death of the Prophet (□) better than what Imam al-Rida (□) provided. If we set aside the clear ahadith which named the Imam (□) as the caliph succeeding the Prophet (□) without any question and consulted the faculty of reason in all the criteria and logical orders to determine the person who should succeed the Prophet (□) as the caliph, the unavoidable outcome would certainly be none other than Ali (□). Besides, had the grudges and the past not been the cause of the removal of Ali from the post of ruler, the question

would have remained unanswered by any honest and equitable person.

Another person asked the Imam ( ), “Tell me, O son of the Messenger of Allah! Why didn’t Ali ibn Abu Talib ( ) fight his enemies during the twenty-five years after the demise of the Messenger of Allah ( ) as he did during the days of his caliphate?” He answered, “It is due to his following the example of the Messenger of Allah ( ) who did not fight the polytheists of Mecca during the thirteen years after his Prophethood, or the ones in Medina during the nineteen months period of his stay there; it is due to the number of his supporters being too small. Likewise, Ali ( ) did not engage himself in fighting his enemies because his own supporters were too few. Since the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ( ) was not nullified by the fact that he did not make jihad during the period of thirteen years (in Mecca) and nineteen months (in Medina), the Imamate of Ali ( ) was not nullified because he did not perform jihad for twenty-five years, for the deterring factor in both examples was one and the same.”

Among the ahadith of Imam al-Rida ( ) is one narrated by Ibrahim ibn Muhammed al-Hamadani; he said, “I asked Abul-Hasan al-Rida ( ), What is the reason for which the Almighty and Exalted Allah drowned Pharaoh even after Pharaoh had believed in Him and admitted His unity?’ He answered, Because he believed only when he saw Allah’s retribution, and belief to avoid danger is not accepted. This is Allah’s judgement regarding past and future generations. The Exalted and the Almighty has said, When they saw Our Punishment, they said, We believe in Allah, the One God, and we reject the partners we used to associate with Him,’ but their professing the faith when they (actually) saw Our Punishment was not going to benefit them’ (Qur’an, Al Mu’min [or Ghafir]:84-85). The Exalted and Almighty has also said, The day that certain Signs of thy Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe in them then, if it did not believe before nor did it earn righteousness through its faith’” (Qur’an, Al An’am:158). So when Pharaoh was about to be drowned, he said, “I believe that there is no God except the One in Whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who submit (to Allah in Islam).’ (It was then said to him), Ah now! But a little while before were you in rebellion! And you did mischief (and violence)! This day shall We save you in your body, so

that you may be a Sign to those who come after thee!'" (Qur'an, Younus:90-92).

This narrative has a moral for those who wish to learn, for iman is not that one believes and returns to his Lord only when he sees no avenue of salvation before him and despair overcomes him; rather, iman is belief in Allah and going towards Him voluntarily in both cases of despair and of hope.

Another hadith narrated by Imam al-Rida (□) stated the following: "Anyone who meets a poor Muslim and greets him in a greeting different from the one whereby he greets the rich, he would meet the Exalted and the Almighty on the Day of Judgement and He is angry with him." In this tradition, the Imam (□) provides us with a very beautiful example of humanity enjoined by genuine Islamic conduct governing the Muslim's conduct with his Muslim brother, for Islam united all members of the nation in its law of personal conduct; there is no distinction for the wealthy man over the deprived poor man, and all people are equal under the judgement of Islam.

Another hadith of the Imam (□) is one in which he was asked by Ibn al-Sikkit, "Why did the Almighty and Exalted God send Musa (Moses) ibn Imran (□) with a miraculous cane and white hand and the tool of sorcery, asa (Jesus [a]) with miraculous medicine, and Muhammed (□) with miraculous speech and oratory?" The Imam (□) said, "When the Almighty and the Exalted One sent Moses (□), sorcery dominated the minds of people of his time. He, therefore, brought them from the Almighty and the Exalted One something which they never had, nor could they bring about anything like it, thus rendering their sorcery void and driving his argument against them home. When the Almighty and the Exalted God sent Jesus during a period of time when chronic diseases became widespread and people were in dire need of a cure, Jesus (□) brought them from Allah, the Almighty and the Exalted, something they never had, bringing the dead back to life, curing those born blind and the lepers by the Will of Allah, proving his argument against them. And when the Almighty and the Exalted One sent Muhammed (□) during the time when speeches and oratory (and I think he said with poetry, too), he brought them the Book of the

Almighty and the Exalted God and with the wisdom and counsel, thereby voiding their arguments." Ibn al-Sikkit said, "By Allah I have never seen anyone like you! What is the argument against people these days, then?" He answered, "Reason. Through it can you come to know who tells the truth about Allah, so you believe in him, and who tells lies about Allah, so you disbelieve in him." Ibn al-Sikkit said, "This, by Allah, is the right answer..."

A miracle is a supernatural thing which the ordinary individual is unable to perform due to his limited energies and motivational powers. Miracles are different from sorcery. Sorcery is not an actual supernatural act but a swift movement which causes the viewer to see the realities turned upside down, or turns the visible picture into its contrary. This may take place by subjecting the viewer to obscure effects which veil from his sight a certain colour or a picture. What leads us to that conclusion is the statement of the Almighty in the context of narrating how Moses ( ) fared with the wizards from the descendants of Israel, saying, "So their ropes and canes seemed to him, because of their sorcery, as though they were crawling" (Qur'an, Taha:66). Sorcery, then, is nothing more than stimulating the imagination, making things look different than they are, and causing one to fall under a magical spell. A miracle is an actual result of a super-natural deed intended to win the argument against people in the process of proving one's true prophethood and mission, and it is an act which Allah causes to take place. It is different from sorcery because it is not subjected to psychological effects, or complications in the movement, but a broadening of the energy which affects matters viewed by man due to the effect of the Might of the Almighty. In narrating the story of Moses ( ), the Almighty states, "... and (appoint him) an apostle to the children of Israel, (with this message): I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave; and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead back to life by Allah's leave'" (Qur'an, Ali Imran:49). And the Almighty has also said, "And it was never the part of an apostle to bring a Sign except as Allah permitted. For each period is a Book (revealed)" (Qur'an, Al Ra'd:38).
Every prophet had a miracle which distinguished him from other

prophets and messengers and which was in harmony, in its own particular way, with the common phenomena prevailing upon the social condition of the time, so that the psychological effect caused by its miraculous effect would become a reality, as the Imam ( ) meant in the tradition stated above. The miracles of prophets, according to the contexts of the verses and narratives, were not the result of the effect of a natural human energy; rather, they were the results of a creative energy whereby Allah distinguished His Prophets for the purpose of establishing the superiority of their argument when such a miracle was necessitated by their mission.

As regarding the miracles of the Imams which are reported in order to testify to their Imamate and to their being the most rightful for the post of caliphate, this is not something unusual about them since they were selected by Allah to be His vicegerents on earth. He entrusted them to carry out the responsibilities of the message after the demise of His Prophet ( ), but what must be researched is that many such miracles were proven to have been performed by them and were attested to by an acceptable medium. But the Imams never needed a miracle beyond the qualifications of knowledge and conduct which distinguished them in order to prove the authenticity of their Imamate, for the qualifications which characterized them were by themselves the miracles proving their right.

Among the ahadith of Imam al-Rida ( ) which deal with the Islamic legislative system is one narrated by Abdullah ibn Tawoos who said, “I told Abul-Hasan al-Rida ( ) that I had a nephew whom I married off to my daughter and who used to frequently pronounce the divorce statement. He said, If he is a descendant of one of your (Shi'a) brethren, there is nothing to worry about, but if he is from these (Sunni) brothers, then recall your daughter, for they shall have to separate.’ I said, But, may my life be sacrificed for yours, did not Abu Abdullah ( ) use to say, Beware of those divorced thrice at one time, for they shall marry more than once?’ He said, Yes, this is the case if the man is one of your brethren, not one of these; whoever follows the creed of certain people is bound to follow their [juristic] rules.’”

As regarding the issue of divorce, which is the subject-matter of this

hadith, the school of thought of the Ahl al-Bayt ( ) determines that if the divorce statement contains “thrice” in it, rather than being repeated twice again, is not considered binding but it would be if the statement were repeated twice provided it meets the other conditions such as the presence of two just witnesses, the absence of the use of force, and the woman being tahir (clean), that is, she has not cohabited with her husband prior to his pronouncement and has not taken her ghusul (ceremonial bath) yet, in addition to other conditions which validate divorce. This is what is commonly accepted, while others have decided that it will be void as the apparent understanding of this hadith suggests. But if the husband repeats his statement, “She is divorced!” three times, it is, according to Imami (Shi'a) Muslims considered as one-time divorce with rendering the repetition null if such repetition is to be doubtful. The rest of Muslim sects regard divorce in both instands as binding and the husband cannot go back to her before she marries another husband.

Another *hadith* narrated by the Imam ( ) says, “The Almighty and Exalted One has decreed three rites each depends on yet another: He decreed the prayers and the payment of zakat; so, He does not accept the prayers of anyone who says his prayers but does not pay zakat; He decreed that one must thank Him and thank his parents, too; so, He does not accept the thanks of one who thanks Him but is not grateful to his parents; and He decreed that one should fear Him and remain in constant contact with his kin; so, anyone who does not remain in close touch with his relatives does not in turn fear Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty.” Still another says, “A believer (mu’min) cannot be truly so except after acquiring three attributes: from his Lord, from his Prophet ( ), and from his fellow humans. From his Lord, he must learn how to keep a secret; the Almighty and the Exalted said, He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with his Mysteries, except an apostle whom He has chosen’ (Qur’an, Al-Jinn:26-27). From his Prophet, he must learn patience while dealing with people; the Exalted and the Almighty ordered His Prophet to be patient with people saying, Uphold forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant (folks).’ (Qur’an, Al-Araf:199). From his fellows, he has to learn patience during periods of poverty and adversity, for the Dear and the Almighty One says, ... And to be firm and patient in pain

and in adversity' (Qur'an, Al- Baqara:177).

A man asked the Imam ( ) once about the meaning of the verse saying, "Whoever relies on Allah, He suffices him." He said, "Reliance on Allah is in various degrees one of which is that you rely on Him in everything related to you, and when He does something to you which you know will not bring you anything good, you rely on His wisdom in doing it, so you nevertheless put your trust in Him willingly. Another is to believe in the Unseen regarding Allah of which you have no knowledge, so you relied on Him and on His custodians, trusting in Him in their regard, and in others." He was also asked once about the extent of such reliance. He said, "It is that you fear none save Allah." What the Imam here means is that you submit to the Will of Allah and accept His decree. Ahmed ibn Najm asked him about the pride which spoils one's deeds. He said, "Pride is degrees; among them is that one sees his bad deed as good, so he likes it and feels proud of it; another is that one believes in Allah and feels he is doing Him a favour by believing in Him, whereas He is the One who enabled that person to believe in Him." He, peace be with him, said once, "If one lacks five attributes, do not expect to gain anything good out of him for your life in this world or for the life to come: if his lineage is known to be untrustworthy, if his nature lacks generosity, if his temper lacks balance, if he lacks a noble conduct, and if he lacks fear of his Lord."

He ( ) was asked once who a lowly person is. He said, "Anyone who has something (a serious moral defect, habit, etc.) to distract him from Allah."

Among the jewels of his wisdom are the following; read them, digest them, and share them with those whom you love:

"Allah abhors hearsay, the loss of one's funds (through foolishness), and excessive questioning."

"To be courteous to people is to cross half the way to achieving wisdom."

"The discretion of a Muslim is not complete except after he acquires

ten merits: Allah accepts his good deeds, he is trustworthy, he sees as plentiful the little good that others do for him, while seeing his own abundant good as little; he does not fret from being asked for favours, nor does he feel tired of constantly seeking knowledge; poverty reached in order to please Allah is better for him than wealth accumulated otherwise; to be subjected to power while trying to serve Allah is better in his regard than achieving power over his foe, and obscurity he prefers over fame." Then he said, "And the third one..., do you know what the third one is?" It was said to him, "What is it?" He said, "Whenever he meets someone, he says to himself, He is better than me and more pious.' People are two types: a person better than him and more pious, and one who is more evil than him and more lowly. If he meets the one who is more evil than him and more lowly, he says to himself, Maybe the goodness of this (statement) is implied, and it is better that he hears such a compliment, while my own goodness is apparent and it is detrimental to me.' And when he sees someone better than him and more pious, he would humble himself before him trying to raise himself to his level. So if he does that, his glory will be higher, his reputation will be better, and he will become distinguished above his contemporaries."

"Silence is one of the gates of wisdom. Silence wins the love of others. It is an indication of everything good."

"Everyone's friend is his reason; his enemy is his ignorance."

"Among the habits of Prophets is cleanliness."

"One who is blessed with plenty must spend generously on his family."

"If you mention someone who is present, use a kunya (surname) for him, and if he is absent, mention his full name."

"Time will come when one's safety lies in ten things nine of which are in staying aloof from people, and the tenth in staying silent."

"Whoever scrutinizes his behaviour wins; whoever does not do so loses. Whoever fears the consequences will live safely. Whoever learns

a moral from others achieves insight, and whoever achieves insight achieves wisdom, and whoever achieves wisdom achieves knowledge. One who befriends the ignorant will be worn out. The best of wealth is that which safeguards one's honour. The best of reason is one's knowledge of his own self. If a true believer becomes angry, his anger does not cause him to abandon righteousness; when he is pleased, his pleasure will not tempt him into wrong-doing, and when he achieves power, he does not take more than what rightfully belongs to him."

"If one's attributes become plentiful, they will relieve him from having to win praise by mentioning them."

"Do not pay attention to the view of someone who does not follow your advice for his own good. Whoever seeks guidance from the appropriate source will never slip, and if he slips, he will find a way to correct himself."

"People's hearts are sometimes coming towards you, sometimes keeping away from you; sometimes they are active, sometimes they are relaxed. If they come along, they will achieve wisdom and understanding, and if they stay away, they will be exhausted and worn out; so, take them when they come to you and when they are active, and shun them when they stay away or are relaxed."

"Accompany with caution the person who has authority over you; be humble when in the company of a friend; stay alert when facing an enemy, and mingle with the public with a smile on your face."

"Postponement is detrimental to the fulfillment of desires. Fulfillment is the gain of the strict. Wastefulness is the calamity of one who can afford it. Miserliness tears up honour. Passion invites trouble. The best and most honourable of virtues is to do others favours, to aid the one who calls for help, to bring the hope of the hopeful to reality, not to disappoint the optimist, to have an ever increase of the number of friends when you are alive, and the number of those who will cry when you die."

"The miser one is never restful. The envious is never pleased. The

grumbling is never loyal. The liar has no conscience."

"One who struggles to satisfy the needs of his family shall have more rewards than those who make jihad in the Way of Allah."

"Assisting the weak is better for you than your act of charity."

"No servant of Allah achieves true belief except when he acquires three attributes: 1) He derives juristic deductions from the creed; 2) He is wise regarding his livelihood, and 3) He is patient while facing calamities."

"Beware of one who wants to offer you advice by speaking behind others' backs; he does not realize how bad his own end shall be."

He (□) was asked once who the best of believers are; he said, "They are the ones who are excited with expectation when they do a good deed, who pray for Allah's forgiveness when they commit a bad one, who show gratitude when they are granted something, who are patient when they are tried, who forgive those who anger them."

He (□) was asked once, "How did you start your day?" He answered, "With a shorter life-span, with our deeds being recorded, with death round our necks, with Fire behind our backs, and we do not know what will be done to us."

He (□) also said, "Wealth is not accumulated except by five means: extreme miserliness, a long-standing optimism, an overwhelming care, a boycott of the relatives, and a preference of this life over the life to come."

Ali ibn Shu'ayb said that he once visited Abul-Hasan Ali al-Rida (□) who asked him, "O Ali! Do you know whose subsistence is the best?" He answered, "You, master, know better than me." He said, "It is that of the one through whom others' subsistence is improved. Do you know who has the worst subsistence?" Ali answered, "You know better than me!" The Imam (□) answered saying, "It is that of the one who does not include others in it." Then he added, "O Ali! Be thoughtful to

the boons for they are wild: if they leave people, they never come back to them. O Ali! The worst of people is someone who stops his contributions to charity, eats by himself, and whips his slave (or servant)."

When al-Hasan ibn Sahl died, He ( ) said, "To congratulate one for a reward in store for him is better than to console him on a swift calamity."

This is a truly magnificent bouquet of shining statements made by Imam a-Rida ( ) which emanate with his wisdom, overflow with his iman, and over-brim with tasty intellectual fruits, but this book is too small to contain all of them. This book was originally meant to be no more than a hundred pages, yet the Almighty has enabled it to grow, for He, and only He, helps promote and disseminate a good word and a good deed. In his statements, the Imam ( ) defines glorious ethical and educational manners and the upright conduct of a true belief, offering some glimpses of humanity for social cooperation and coexistence a Muslim is supposed to implement if he wants to be in harmony with the principles of Islam. They make up, if implemented, a milestone in the social change, turning an oppressive ignorant society into an advanced civilized one built upon virtue and love, justice and equity, respect and morality. But who is there to take upon himself such a task? Who has the power to implement the moral precepts provided by this great Imam ( ) and social reformer? The answer is too obvious to state...

We have to translate these statements into actions in our daily life and be in harmony with their ethical and humane practical implications if we wish to direct our individual and social conduct to the right direction which safeguards its principles and precepts in order to create a nation based on virtues and humanity, and build it from within in a firm spiritual structure. Such a structure is reflects its practical reality and affects its intellectual and social objectives so that it would be "the best nation that ever was" (Qur'an, Sarat Ali 'Imran:110).

May the Almighty enable us and your own self to follow in the footsteps of Imam a-Rida ( ), and may He strengthen our conviction, keep our feet firm on His Right Path, the Path of happiness in the life of

this world and of salvation in the life to come, Allahomma aammen.

6) IMAM MUHAMMAD AT-TAQI ( )

His name is Muhammed; "Abu Ja'far," at-Taqi and al-Jawad are his titles. He is sometimes called Abu Ja'far II, the first being Imam Muhammed al-Baqir ( ). His father's name is Imam Ali al-Rida ( ); his respected mother is known as Subaika or Sukayna. He was born in Medina on the 10th of Rajab 195 A.H./April 8, 811 A.D. At that time, al-Amin son of Harun ar-Rashid was the monarch of Baghdad.

It is a sad story that Imam Muhammed at-Taqi ( ) had to face series of misfortunes since his early childhood. For only a very brief peaceful period, he enjoyed the love and availed himself of the teachings of his father. He was five years old when Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) was forced to leave Medina for Khurasan. The sire never saw his son again since then, for Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) died in Merv three years after this separation. The astonishment of people knew no bounds when, a few years later, they saw the boy arguing and expostulating with the renowned scholars of fiqh, tafsir, hadith and kalam, and subduing them in the presence of al-Ma'mun. They had to admit that God-gifted knowledge never depends on material resources or on age.

Political exigencies had compelled al-Ma'mun to cultivate relations with the descendants of Imam Ali and Fatima ( ) in order to win the support of the Shi'as. After all, being a Hashemite himself, he was related to them though remotely. He was aware of the political need to maintain close relations with them; therefore, at one of the gatherings relof heir-apparentship, he married his sister Umm Habiba to Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) and betrothed his daughter Umm al-Fadl to the son of Imam al-Rida ( ), this Muhammed at-Taqi ( ). He thought that those steps would enable him to win over Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) completely.

But al-Ma'mun soon realized that Imam al-Rida ( ) continued to lead the same simple and saintly life which characterized the descendants of the Prophet ( ). The pattern of his true Islamic life, which was bound to disseminate the spirit of fraternity and equality, was obviously harmful to al-Ma'mun's authority, especially when Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) was now a member of the royal family. It was at this point that he

decided to put an end to the Imam's life. But as he thought it expedient that he should keep the Shi'as, particularly the Persians, on his side, he pretended to be very depressed at Imam Ali al-Rida's death, as the reader has already come to know. This was also necessary for him in trying his best to prove that he had no hand in killing him. In order to isolate himself from any suspicion, he summoned al-Rida's son, Muhammed at-Taqi, from Medina to Baghdad to marry him off to his daughter Umm al-Fadl although she was already engaged.

The appointment of Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) as heir-apparent had been an intolerable dilemma for the Abbasides; so, when al-Rida died, they sighed in relief. They also succeeded in causing al-Ma'mun to appoint his son Trenchaman as his successor who later came to be known as caliph al-Muta'sim Billah. During the time when Imam al-Rida was the heir-apparent, the colour of the caliph's court and royal robes had been changed from black to green. After the Imam's death, they changed it again to black which signalled the restoration of Abbaside traditions. All these steps undertaken by al-Ma'mun sufficiently satisfied the Abbasides who thought that he was acting in accordance with their own desires. But when al-Ma'mun procliam ed that he was going to marry his daughter off to the son of Imam Ali al-Rida ( ), their tribal attitude was stimulated. They could no longer hide their feelings, and their delegation approached al-Ma'mun and complained in in the most unambiguous statements they could make, telling him that the honours which he had showered on Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) had grieved them, and that they tolerated it because the Imam could be respected in view of his age, learning and other virtues, and that he deserved those honours only to a certain extent. But elevating his son, who was quite young, so much as to prefer him over all other dignitaries and learned scholars did not befit the caliph. Furthermore, the marriage of al-Ma'mun's sister to Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) did not prove prosperous. Why did the caliph, then, wish to offer the hand of the princess to al-Rida's son, anyway?

Al-Ma'mun told them that al-Rida's son, Muhammed, was no doubt a boy of tender age, but he had inherited his father's virtues and qualities in full; the learned scholars of the Islamic world could not compete with him, and that if they doubted, they could put the boy to test. This reply, though totally said in jest, amounted to a challenge. Prompted by

al-Ma'mun's taunt, they consented to judge the boy's knowledge in a contest with the most learned authority of Baghdad then, namely Yahya ibn Aktham.

Al-Ma'mun convened a pompous gathering for this open expostulation. There was anxiety to see this unequal match where a boy of eight was to contend with the seasoned and renowned Chief Justice of the land. People crowded from every quarter. Historians have recorded that apart from dignitaries and the nobility, 900 seats were reserved only for scholars. Al-Ma'mun's reign was described as the golden age of learning; experts from every trade and profession had assembled in that great capital from every corner of the world.

Al-Ma'mun had a carpet laid by the side of his throne to seat Imam Muhammed at-Taqi. In front of him was accommodated the Chief Justice Yahya ibn Aktham. There was pindrop silence among the audience who waited to hear the arguments. Silence was broken by Yahya who said, "Will His Majesty allow me to put some questions to Muhammed at-Taqi?" Al-Ma'mun answered: "You may seek that permission from Muhammed at-Taqi himself."

Yahya (to Muhammed at-Taqi): "Do you allow me to ask you a question?" Muhammed at-Taqi: "Yes, you may ask whatever you please." Yahya: "What is the atonement for a person who hunts a game while he is dressed in the pilgrimage garb?" The question itself indicated that Yahya underestimated the status of his opponent. Intoxicated with the pride of position and knowledge, he thought that the young boy might well be aware of simple daily routine problems of prayer or fasting, but the possibility that he might be totally ignorant of the statutes of pilgrimage or of the atonements of the sins or mistakes committed by a pilgrim never entertained his mind.
The sagacious, young Imam was clever enough to respond to the old seasoned inquirer. Instead of giving a general or a vague reply, he analyzed the different aspects of the question so aptly that the audience immediately had a true evaluation of the Imam's knowledge and of Yahya's shallow-mindedness. Yahya, too, was puzzled and felt humiliated when the Imam addressed him thus:

"Your question is utterly vague and lacks definition. You should first clarify whether the game killed was outside the sanctified area or inside it; whether the hunter was aware of his sin or did so in ignorance; did he kill the game purposely or by mistake? Was the hunter a slave or a free man? Was he an adult or a minor? Did he commit the sin for the first time or had he done so before? Was the hunted game a bird or some thing else? Was it a small animal or a big one? Is the sinner sorry for his misdeed or does he insist on it? Did he kill it secretly at night or openly during daylight? Was he putting on the pilgrimage garb for hajj or for the umra?! Unless you clarify and define these aspects, how can you have a definite answer?"

Whatever Yahya's knowledge might have been, he was undoubtedly a well-read man specialized in jurisprudence. While the Imam was unfolding all such aspects of the problem, he had concluded that he was no match for his ingenious opponent. His face lost colour and the onlookers knew the situation as it was. His lips were sealed and he made no reply. Al-Ma'mun fully assessed his condition and thought it useless to put any further pressure on him. He, rather, requested Imam Muhammed at-Taqi ( ) to solve all the aspects of the question one by one so that the listeners might gain knowledge. The Imam, in spite of his young age, explained the various aspects of the question. Yahya, silent and puzzled, gazed at him. But al-Ma'mun was bent on carrying the matter to its very extreme. He, therefore, requested the Imam to put some questions to Yahya if he liked. The Imam accordingly said, "May I ask you a question?" Disillusioned, Yahya, who now had a correct idea about the Imam's ability and had now no misunderstanding about himself, said in a humble tone: "Your grace can ask; I shall reply if I can or I shall get it solved by your own self." Then the Imam put up a question in reply to which Yahya admitted his ignorance. The Imam explained it, too. Al-Ma'mun's joy knew no bounds. Addressing the audience, he said, "Did I not tell you that this Progeny has been gifted by Allah with unlimited knowledge? None can cope with even the children of this elevated House."

The excitement of the gathering was great: all unanimously exclaimed that al-Ma'mun's assumption was correct and that Imam Muhammed at-Taqi ( ) was peerless. Al-Ma'mun then thought it advisable to

marry his daughter off to Imam Muhammed at-Taqi there and then. The Imam ( ) recited the marriage sermon in person. This sermon, as a remembrance, is being recited at weddings everywhere throughout the Muslim world ever since. Overjoyed at this auspicious occasion, al-Ma'mun demonstrated his generosity by giving away millions in charity to the poor. Common people were given with regards to his grants.

One year after the marriage, Imam Muhammed at-Taqi ( ) lived in Baghdad. Then al-Ma'mun allowed him to return to Medina with his daughter Umm al-Fadl surrounded with great pomp.

Imam Muhammed at-Taqi ( ) occupied the highest position in human virtues and moral attainments, such is the Prophet's family. To meet everyone humbly, fulfill the needs of the poor, maintain Islamic equality and simplicity, help the destitute secretly, treat even the foes fairly, extend hospitality, impart knowledge to the scholars of religion and the like, all marked his saintly life.

Common people, who could not appreciate such heights of moral excellence, might have thought that the new relationship, i.e. to become son-in-law of the most influential monarch of his time, must influence the pattern of life of the Imam and change his manners altogether. Al-Ma'mun, too, might have thought on the same lines because spiritualism which was the chief characteristic of this Progeny, was against the practices of worldly rulers.

In order to uphold their imperialistic and luxurious norms of life, monarchs like al-Ma'mun wanted to do away with these saints who personified righteousness, compassion, faith, piety, fraternity and justice as taught by Islam. Yazid's demanding obedience from Imam Husain ( ) or al-Ma'mun appointing Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) as his heir-appaent were two different aspects of one phenomenon. The procedures were different but the purpose was the same. Imam Husain ( ) did not bow to pay homage, so he was slain on the battlefield. Imam Ali al-Rida ( ) did not serve the cause of Abbaside imperialism, so he was silenced with poison.

Undoubtedly, Imam al-Rida ( ) did not conform to al-Ma'mun's

designs, nor desires, but this did not disappoint him. Al-Rida's mature way of thinking and simple norm of life could not be changed. But there was the hope that in all probability a tender boy, who was brought up in the luxurious atmosphere of a royal palace, would grow up to be an ambitious, merry-making prince–altogether against his ancestral ways and views.

With the exception of a few enlightened persons, everybody would think on such lines. But the world stood aghast to see that the young son-in-law of the most distinguished monarch of his time refused to stay in the royal palace and lived instead in a rented house, thus maintaining his ancestral anti-monarchical conduct, leading a simple and modest life.

In the Middle East, it is usually seen that if the bride's people are fairly rich, they wish that the groom might live with them; if not in the same house, at least in the same town. The will-power of the Imam ( ) can be judged from the fact that he lived in a separate dwelling. After one year, when al-Ma'mun realized that his son-in-law was not pleased with staying in Baghdad, he had to allow him to go to Medina with Umm al-Fadl.

Having returned to Medina, he maintained the same ancestral, unimposing behaviour: no body-guards, no pomp, no restrictions, no visiting times, no discrimination. He spent most of his time sitting at the Prophet's Mosque, where Muslims came to avail from his preaching. The narrators of hadith and other students of theology came to inquire about religious sciences, and the Imam guided them by explaining every complicated issue. All the world saw that Imam Ja'far's successor, seated on the same mat, was guiding the people towards faith and piety.

Imam at-Taqi ( ) allowed the same amount of freedom to his wife Umm al-Fadl and imposed the same restrictions on her as his ancestors had done with their wives. He did not care much about the fact that Umm al-Fadl was a princess. Although she lived with him, he married another lady who was a descendant of Ammar ibn Yasir. Allah had intended to continue the line of Imamate through her, and she gave

birth to (later) Imam Ali an-Naqi (□), the tenth Imam. Umm al-Fadl complained about this to her father. Surely this would have passed heavily on al-Ma'mun's heart but he could not interfere in the matter. He wrote his daughter saying, "Do not make such complaints to me in the future. I cannot stop Muhammed atTaqi from those things which Allah has made lawful."

There are precedents, no doubt, that in view of the high personal virtues of a woman, her husband does not marry another lady. For example, while Khadaja lived, the Holy Prophet did not marry any other wife. Similarly, Imam Ali (□) married no other woman during the life-time of Fatima al-Zahra' (□). But the same distinction could not be awarded to the daughter of a king because it was against the spirit of Islam which the Prophet's descendants were to safeguard, implement, and preserve.

Imam Muhammed at-Taqi's speech was very moving and effective. During the hajj season, he once addressed a gathering of Muslims, stating the commandments of the Divine Law of Sharaa. The audience included learned scholars who admitted that they had never heard such a comprehensive speech.

During the days of Imam al-Rida (□), there was a group which believed that the Imamate had come to an end with Imam Musa al-Kazim (□). They were called the Waqfiyya (Waqfism). Imam Muhammed at-Taqi (□) admonished them so nicely, they abandoned their wrong beliefs for good. Nobody of that creed persisted in adhering to such beliefs.

Through Imam al-Rida (□), scholars came to learn the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (□). A collection of brief and wise sayings is also among his legacy, resembling and ranking in wisdom next to the sayings of his ancestor Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (□). Some profound discourses on theology and monotheism are also to his credit.

Al-Ma'mun died in 218 A.H./833 A.D. He was succeeded by his brother al-Mu'taman, the second heir apparent after Imam al-Rida (□). He came to be known as al-Muta'sim Billah al-Abbasi. His niece, Umm al-Fadl, now began to send him more complaining letters than she did during the days of her father. As al-Ma'mun had given her in marriage

to Imam at-Taqi ( ) in spite of the opposition of all the tribe, he paid no attention to her letters. Rather, he silenced her with disappointing replies. But al-Muta'sim was jealous of Imam al-Rida ( ). He had also led the opposition in the matter of Imam at-Taqi's marriage with his niece.

Al-Muta'sim now got a chance to settle his difference in this matter. Imam Muhammed at-Taqi's fame as a great scholar and people's gathering around him, as well as the fame of his world-renown noble character, annoyed him. The failure of the political tactics, too, intensified his resentment. All these factors intensified his enmity. In the second year of his reign, he summoned Imam Muhammed at-Taqi from Medina to Baghdad, writing to the governor of Medina expressly in this regard. Imam Muhammed at-Taqi had no choice except to set out for Baghdad leaving his son Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) with his mother in Medina.

Upon his arrival at Baghdad, Imam at-Taqi was not harmed by al-Muta'sim. But the Imam's stay in Baghdad was a forcible act which can be labelled as custody or house arrest. Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ), therefore, was killed with the very same soundless weapon which was quite frequently used against his ancestors. He was poison, so he died on the 29th of Thul-Qida, 220 A.H./November 24, 835 A.D. and was buried near his grandfather Imam Musa al-Kazim ( ). It is due to these two saints' tombs that the place is called Kazimain (the two Kazims, the enduring ones). Inna Lillah wa Inna Ilayhi Rajian; surely we belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return.

7) IMAM ALI AN-NAQI ( )

His name, Ali, is usually prefixed by his titles "Abul-Hasan" and "an-Naqi," the pure one.Since both Imams Ali al-Murtada and Ali al-Rida ( ) were also called "Abul-Hasan" each, Imam Ali an-Naqi is known as "Abul-Hasan III." His mother's name is Sumana Khatun. He was born in Medina on Rajab 5, 214 A.H./September 8, 829 A.D. He enjoyed the love of his father Imam at-Taqi ( ) for only six years because his father had to leave for Baghdad where he died on the 29th of Thu al-Qida 220 A.H./November 24, 835 A.D. and the responsibilities of Imamate devolved on his young son's shoulders. Providence was the

only tutor and instructor that reared and raised him to the extreme zenith of learning.

Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) was still young when the Abbaside ruler al-Muta'sim Billah died and was succeeded by al-Wathiq Billah who died in 236 A.H./850 A.D. Al-Mutawakkil, the most cruel and deadly enemy of Ahl al-Bayt (□), ascended the throne in the same year then died in 250 A.H./864 A.D. and was succeeded by al-Muntasir Billah who ruled for only six months. On his death, al-Mustain was installed on the throne of the Abbasides in Baghdad. The latter had to part with his crown, as well as with his head, in 253 A.H./867 A.D. and was succeeded by al-Mu'tazz Billah during whose regime Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) died.

Al-Muta'sim remained preoccupied with war against the Byzantines and had to deal with the troubles created by the Abbaside tribesmen in Baghdad. He did not harass the young Imam who carried out his responsibilities peacefully. After him, al-Wathiq Billah, too, treated Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) fairly. But when he was succeeded by his brother al-Mutawakkil son of al-Muta'sim, the period of persecution and misfortune began on a full scale. This ruler exceeded all his predecessors in bearing animosity towards Ahl al-Bayt (□).

During the 16 years of his Imamate, Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) had become famous throughout the Islamic world. Those who loved to learn the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (□) always flocked around him. In the 4th year of al-Mutawakkil's reign, the governor of Medina, Abdullah ibn Hakim, started harassing the Imam. After persecuting him personally, he sent hostile reports against him to Baghdad. He wrote the central government there saying that the Imam was assembling apparatuses of kingdom, and that his followers were in such numbers that he could rise against the government whenever he wished.

Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) became aware of such antagonism in sufficient time. In order to counteract, he, too, wrote a letter to al-Mutawakkil explaining the personal enmity the lying governor had borne against him. As a political step, al-Mutawakkil was quick to dismiss the governor. At the same time, he sent a regiment under the command of

Yahya ibn Harthamah to explain to the Imam in a friendly way that the caliph wished him to stay in the capital for a few days before going back to Medina.

The Imam knew very well the motives behind this request. He knew that the polite invitation actually meant his banishment from his ancestral city. But to refuse was useless, as it would involve a forcible departure later. Leaving the sacred city was as painful to him as it had been for his respected forefathers, viz. Imam Husain (□), Imam Musa al-Kazim (□), Imam Ali al-Rida (□) and Muhammed at-Taqi (□). This type of harassment had almost become a legacy. Al-Mutawakkil's letter to the Imam was full of respect and terms of endearment. The military detachment sent to escort him as retinue or bodyguards was actually a deceitful ploy. So when the Imam reached Samarra' (Surra man Ra'a), and al-Mutawakkil was informed, he neither arranged for his reception nor for his stay. He ordered to accommodate him in a wilderness where the city's beggars usually dwelt. Although the Prophet's descendants gladly associated with the poor and the destitute, and they did not covet luxurious living, al-Mutawakkil meant to thus insult the Imam who stayed there for three days; thereafter, al-Mutawakkil placed him under the custody of his secretary Razzaqi, banning his meetings with others.

It has been seen that during the imprisonment of Imam Musa al-Kazim (□), the Imam's moral charm had softened the guards' stone hearts. Likewise, Razzaqi was impressed by the greatness of Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) and began to provide for his comfort. This leniency could not remain hidden from al-Mutawakkil who transferred the Imam (□) to the custody of Sa'd, a cruel and ruthless man in whose jail Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) spent twelve long years. In spite of all the hardships he had to suffer there, he spent his time worshipping his Maker, fasting during the day and praying during the night. Although confined within the four walls of a dark dungeon cell, his fame was on the wing. He was known in every house of Samarra', rather throughout all of Iraq. Millions hated the cruel ruler who had put such a man of noble character in prison.

Al-Fadl ibn Khaqan, who loved the Prophet's Progeny, had risen to the

post of Minister in al-Mutawakkil's cabinet solely by virtue of his intellectual and administrative merits. On his recommendation, al-Mutawakkil ordered the Imam's imprisonment to be changed to house arrest, granting him a piece of land and allowing him to build his house on it to live therein. But Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) was forbidden from leaving Samarra'. Sa'd was ordered to keep a tight surveillance on the Imam's movements, contacts and correspondence.

During this period, too, Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) set an admirable example of trust in Allah, ignoring all worldly gains. In spite of permanent residence in the capital, he neither made a protest to the caliph, nor did he ever ask him for a favour. He continued the same worshipping and hermit-like life that he had led during his imprisonment. The tyrant had changed his behaviour but the saint had maintained his own. Even during such circumstances, Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) was not allowed to live peacefully. He was not harassed physically but psychologically. His house was periodically searched for arms or dissenting correspondence undermining the position of the government. Such an act is certainly painful for a man of an innocent and noble character. To top all this, the Imam was once summoned to the royal palace where the cups of wine were in rotation. Surrounded by his courtiers, al-Mutawakkil was very much given to merry-making, so much so that in the excess of vanity and lewdness, the arrogant and shameless ruler handed the cup of wine to the Imam and asked him to drink. This order was surely more painful than a thousand strokes of the sword, but the guardian of faith said with unruffled dignity: "Spare me this order, for the flesh and blood of my forefathers and my own have never mixed with wine." Had there been a slight sense of faith in al-Mutawakkil, he would have been impressed by the dignity of this saintly reply. But he was dead to such a feeling; he, therefore, said, "Well, if you do not like it, then sing a song for us." The Imam replied: "I do not know that art, either." At last the haughty monarch said, "You shall have to recite a few verses of poetry, then, in any tone you like." This crude and ridiculous behaviour would have infuriated any ordinary person, but the dignified Imam remained undisturbed and sought to do what he was compelled to. He turned the ruler's order for recitation of poetry into an opportunity for preaching, and he recited the following poetic verses:

باتوا على قلل الأجبال تحرسهم
غلب الرجال، فلم تنفعهم القلل
واستنزلوا بعد عز من معاقلهم
و اسكنوا حفرا، يا بئسما نزلوا
ناداهم صارخ من بعد دفنهم:
أين الأساور و التيجان و الحلل؟

أين الوجوه التي كانت منعمة؟
من دونها تضرب الأستار و الكلل

فافصح القبر عنهم حين ساءلهم:
تلك الوجوه عليها الدود تقتتل
قد طال ما أكلوا دهرا وقد شربوا
واصبحوا اليوم بعد الأكل قد أكلوا

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things.
There is no armour against the fate;
Death lays its icy hand on kings.
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down.
And in the earth be equal made
To the labourer’s scythe and spade.

No fortress on the mountain peak
Could save the kings from the jaws of death.
Their pomp and power proved too weak;
They lie in graves, deprived of breath.

The cold earth asks them in contempt:
“Whither is the robe, the crown, and the throne?!
“Did cruel Death thy beauty exempt?!
“Did it respect thy royal blood and bone?!”

The grave replies
With sorrowful sighs:

“Those beautiful forms
“Are now food for the worms!”

Having heard these lines recited by the Imam so profoundly, the gathering became spell-bound. The drunkards making merry just a moment ago now burst into tears. Even the proud king began to weep and wail. As soon as he recovered a bit, he allowed the Imam to go home.

Another incident that disturbed him a great deal was al-Mutawakkil’s oppressive order forbidding the public from visiting Kerbala’ and Najaf. Throughout his territories ran the order that people should not go to visit the tombs of Imam Ali ( ) and Imam Husain ( ). Anybody disobeying this order would do so under the penalty of death. He further ordered that the buildings in Najaf and Kerbala’ be levelled to the ground, that all the mausoleums be razed and the land around Imam Husain’s tomb be ploughed. It was not, however, possible to stop those who loved Ahl al-Bayt ( ) from visiting those holy shrines. They disobeyed, and thousands of them were put to death indiscriminately. Undoubtedly, the Imam was as sorry for each one of them as he could have been on the death of a near relative of his. Due to this oppressive environment, he could not even preach or convey to the faithful the necessary instructions. This sorrowful situation lasted till al-Mutawakkil’s death in 247 A.H./861 A.D.

At al-Mutawakkil’s court, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib ( ) was mimicked and mocked by the buffoons while al-Mutawakkil and his courtiers burst into laughter. It was such an insulting scene that once al-Mutawakkil’s son could not help protesting thus: “It was somewhat tolerable if you spoke ill of Imam Ali ( ) yourself, but since you yourself say that he was related to you, how do you allow these wretched buffoons to mock him like that?” Instead of being sorry, al-Mutawakkil jested with his son and composed two couplets abusive of his mother which he instructed the singers to sing. They used to always sing those couplets as al-Mutawakkil laughed heartily.

Another event of those wretched times is equally painful. Ibn al-Sikkit of Baghdad, the acknowledged scholar of lexicography and syntax and

the genius of his time, was the tutor of al-Mutawakkil's son. One day the cruel ruler asked this great scholar: "Are my two sons more respectable than Hasan and Husain ( )?" Ibn al-Sikkit loved Ahl al-Bayt. He could not control his feelings and flatly replied: "Not to speak of Imams Hasan and Husain ( ), Imam Ali's slave Qanbar is more respectable than both of your sons." Hearing these words, al-Mutawakkil flew into a passion and ordered that Ibn al-Sikkit's tongue be cut off. This barbaric order was carried out immediately, leading to the death of one of those who cherished the Prophet's Progeny ( ).

Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) was not physically connected with these events. But each was like a blow of the sword, not striking his neck but torturing his soul. Al-Mutawakkil's cruelties caused him to be the object of common hatred. Even his own children set their hearts against him. One of them, al-Muntasir, conspired with his chief slave Baqir al-Rumi to murder al-Mutawakkil while the latter was asleep, using his own sword, thus the world heard a sigh of relief and the population of hell increased by one; the death of the tyrant and the caliphate of al-Muntasir were proclaimed. After assuming the throne, al-Muntasir revoked the unjust orders of his father. Visiting the shrines of Najaf and Kerbala' was permitted without any restriction. The tombs, moreover, received minor repairs. Al-Muntasir's conduct towards Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) was fair. But the life of the new ruler proved to be mysteriously too short; he died in 248 A.H./862 A.D. after a brief rule of only six months. After him, caliph al-Mustaan Billah, too, did not mistreat the Imam ( ).

As stated above, Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) had built a house in Samarra' and did not go back to Medina either out of his own free will or under the orders of the rulers. Due to his continued stay there and the lack of interference by the regime, the students of the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt ( ) surrounded him. Al-Mustaan Billah died in 252 A.H./866 A.D. and was succeeded by al-Mu'tazz Billah who was alarmed by the Imam's popularity, so he put an end to his life.

Imam Ali an-Naqi's conduct and moral excellence were the same as those of each and every member of the sacred series of Infallibles. Imprisonment, confinement or freedom, in every case these sacred

souls were engaged in worship, helping the poor, living a most ascetic and God-fearing life, disseminating knowledge and scholarship and promoting virtue. Totally refraining from succumbing to their own desires, greed or worldly ambitions, they lived dignified in misfortune. Dealing fairly even with the foes and helping the destitute were the qualities marking their conduct. The same virtues were reflected during the lifetime of Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) as well.

During the period of his imprisonment, the Imam ( ) had a grave dug up for him and was ready by his prayer-mat. Some visitors expressed either apprehension or bewilderment thereat. The Imam explained thus: "In order to remember my end, I keep the grave before my eyes." Be it so, but in reality, it was a silent, unspoken protest against those cruel rulers who wanted the Imam ( ) to give up his pure Islamic teachings. It was a negation of their demand of obeisance. It showed that the worldly rulers who can frighten common men with death can never bend a saint who is ready to embrace death at any moment. In spite of this fearlessness, he never took part in any secret or subversive activity against the government. Living permanently in a capital where daily conspiracies were sapping the roots of the Abbasside regime, he could never be accused of treason by the strong secret intelligence of those kings.

Can you imagine the extent of the political turmoil of those unstable days? Al-Mutawakkil was opposed by his own son al-Muntasir and he ended in being slain by his own Turkish slave Baqir al-Rami. After al-Muntasir's death, the court nobility decided to take away the governemnt from the ruling dynasty. The regime of al-Mustaan was shaken by the uprising of Yahya ibn Omer ibn Yahya ibn Zaid al-Alawi in Kufa, and by the occupation of Tabaristan by Hasan ibn Zaid (titled "Dai al-Haqq," the caller to justice) and his establishment of a permanent government there; the revolt of the Turkish slaves in Samarra' and al-Mustaan's flight to Baghdad to take refuge in its fort, and in the end his compulsory abdication and murder by al-Mu'tazz. Add to this list the Byzantine aggression during the reign of al-Mu'tazz who feared the danger of his own brother; Muayyad's demise; Muwaffaq's imprisonment in Basra–it was a continuous chain of chaos of which an opportunist could easily take advantage.

But Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) could not be suspected even of taking part in any of these struggles for power. Any opportunist, excited by greed or revenge, will always take arms against a regime which not only harassed him but also exiled, insulted and imprisoned him. Yet, these sacred souls considered it below their spotless honour and dignity to partake in those vainglorious bids for power. They looked down upon all these struggles and always rose above the vile level of temporal temptations, declaring that all such acts were below them and their standard of virtue.

The Imam ( ) died during the reign of al-Mu'tazz Billah in Samarra' on the 3rd of Rajab 254 A.H./June 28, 868 A.D. His death was attended only by his son Hasan al-'Askari who led the funeral prayers and arranged his burial, laying him to rest in his own residence. Now high stands his mausoleum which is being visited daily by tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world.

8) IMAM HASAN AL-'ASKARI ( )

His name is al-Hasan, "Abu Muhammed." Being a resident of Askar, a suburb of Samarra', he is titled "al-'Askari." His father was Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) and his mother was Salal Khatun, a role model of piety, adoration, chastity and generosity. He was born in Medina on the tenth of Rabi' al-Akhir, 232 A.H./ December 4, 846 A.D. He lived under the care of his respected father upto the age of 11. Then his father had to leave for Samarra' and he was to accompany him and thus share the hardships of the journey with the family. At Samarra', he spent his time with his father either in imprisonment or in partial freedom. He had, however, the opportunity to benefit from his father's teaching and instruction. His father died in 254 A.H./868 A.D. when he himself was twenty-two. Four months before his death, the father declared his son to be his successor and executor of his will, asking his followers to bear witnes to the fact. Thus were the responsibilities of Imamate vested upon him which he fulfilled even in the face of great difficulties and hostilities.

Imam Hasan al-'Askari partook in all misfortunes and hardships suffered by his father, whether imprisonment or confinement. In the

early days of his Imamate, al-Mu'tazz Billah, was the al-Abbasi caliph who, when deposed in 255 A.H./869 A.D., was succeeded by al-Muhtadi. After The latter's brief reign of only eleven months and one week, al-Mu'tamid ascended to the throne. During these caliphs' regimes, Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) did not enjoy any peace of mind at all. Although the Abbaside dynasty was involved in constant complications and disorder, each and every king thought it necessary to keep the Imam imprisoned.

One of the Holy Prophet's traditions stated that the Prophet ( ) would be succeeded by twelve princes, the last of whom would be the Mahdi, Qa'im Ali Muhammed. The Abbasides knew well that the true successors of the Prophet were these very Imams ( ). With Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) being the eleventh of this series, his son would surely be the twelfth, the last. They, therefore, tried to put an end to the life of Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) so that nobody would succeed him. The house arrest once imposed on Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) was considered inadequate for Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ), so he was imprisoned, away from his family. Undoubtedly, the revolutionary intervals between two regimes gave him brief periods of freedom. Yet as soon as the new king came to the throne, he followed his predecessor's policy and imprisoned the Imam again. The Imam's brief life, therefore, was mostly spent inside dungeon cells.

The hardship of imprisonment reached its peak time during the reign of al-Mu'tamid Billah, although the latter knew the lineage, piety, knowledge and righteousness of the Imam as did all his predecessors.

Once, during a devastating drought, a Christian hermit was able to demonstrate that he could bring rain whenever he prayed to Allah. This led many Muslims to convert to Christianity. In order to save Islam from this calamity, Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) was brought out of jail. He noticed how that Christian hermit raised his hands in prayers, and how as soon as he did so, rain started pouring down. He told the gathering that the piece of bone belonged to the corpse of one of the Prophets of Allah, and he proved his point by raising it himself in his hand, and upon doing so, Lo, rain started pouring down again, as if the skies were weeping for the prophet! The Imam ( ) thus removed the

common doubts from the minds of the people and kept them firmly on Islam. Al-Mu'tamid Billah was so impressed that he felt too ashamed to send the Imam back to prison; so, he put him under house arrest instead. Complete freedom, however, was not granted.

During all circumstances, the Imams (□) carried out their duties of guiding the people no matter what. Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□) was subjected to numerous restrictions, so much so that those who sought to learn the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (□) and their Shi'a point of view could not reach him. In order to solve this problem, the Imam appointed certain confidants as his deputies in view of their knowledge of jurisprudence. These persons satisfied the curiosity of inquirers as much as they could. But if they could not solve certain theological problems, they would keep them pending the solutions provided by the Imam (□) whenever they got the opportunity to see him. Of course, the visit to the Imam (□) by a few individuals could be allowed by the government but certainly not by groups who wished to see the Imam on a regular basis.

The khums (1/5 of total savings), which was being paid to the Imams by the believers who cherished them and regarded them as representatives of the Divine Law, was spent by these sacred saints on religious matters, and to sustain the Prophet’s descendants. This khums was now secretly collected by these deputies who spent it according to the directives of the Imam (□). They, accordingly, were in constant danger of being identified as such by the government’s powerful secret intelligence service. In order to avert this danger, Uthman ibn Sa'd and his son Abu Ja'far Muhammed, two prominent deputies of the Imam (□) in the capital Baghdad, ran a large shop trading in oils. This provided them with free contact with the concerned people. It was thus that even under the very thumb of the tyrant regime, those devotees managed to run the system of the Divine law unsuspected.

Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□) was one of the illustrious series of the immaculate Infallibles each member of whom displayed the moral excellence of human perfection. He was peerless in knowledge, forbearance, forgiveness, generosity, sacrifice, and piety. Whenever al-Mu'tamid Billah asked anybody about his captive Hasan al-'Askari, he

was told that the Imam ( ) fasted during the day and adored his Lord during the night, and that his tongue uttered no word but remembrance of his Maker. During the brief periods of freedom and stay at home, people approached him hoping to avail from his benevolence, and they went back well rewarded. Once when the Abbaside caliph asked Ahmed ibn Abdullah ibn Khaqan, his Minister for Charities (awqaf), about the descendants of Imam Ali ( ), he reported: "I do not know anybody among them who is more distinguished than Hasan al-'Askari. None can surpass him in dignity, knowledge, piety and abstinence, nor can anybody match him in nobleness, majestic grandeur, modesty and honesty."

When his father Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) died and the family was busy arranging for his burial, some servants stole certain articles, thinking that none would notice it. When the burial was over, he called the servants and said to them, "I ask you about some missing items; if you tell me the truth, I will pardon you; but if you speak falsely, I shall get all those items from you then punish you." Then he asked each for the items which he had stolen. When they confessed their guilt, he got the articles back from them and spared them the penalty.

Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) had a brief span of life, only twenty-eight years, but even during this short period of time, which was ruffled by a chain of troubles and tribulations, several high ranking scholars benefitted from his ocean of knowledge. He also uprooted the atheism and disbelief which ensued from the philosophers of that age. One of those philosophers was the renown Ishaq al-Kindi who was then writing a book on what he called "self-contradictions" in the Holy Qur'an. When the news reached the Imam, he waited for an opportunity to refute and rebut him. By chance, some of Ishaq's students came to visit him. The Imam ( ) asked them: "Is there anyone among you who can stop Ishaq from wasting his time in this useless effort fighting the Holy Qur'an?" The students said, "Master! We are his students; how can we object to his teaching?" The Imam urged that they could at least convey to their teacher what he had to tell them. They replied that they would be ready to cooperate as much as they could.

The Imam ( ) then recited a few verses from the Holy Qur'an which

the philosopher considered as contradictory of one another. He then explained to them thus: “Your teacher thinks that some of the words in these verses have only one meaning. But according to the Arabic tongue, these words have other meanings too which, when taken into consideration, indicate no contradiction in the overall meaning. Thus, your teacher is not justified for basing his objections and allegations of contradictions on the premises of the ‘wrong meaning’ which he himself selects for such verses.” He then put up some examples of such words before them so clearly that the students absorbed the point and comprehended the precedents of more than one meaning.

When these students visited Ishaq al-Kindi and, after routine discussions, reproduced the disputed points, he was surprised. He was a fair-minded scholar, and he attentively listened to his students’ explanations. Then he said, “What you have argued is above your capacity; tell me truly who has taught you these points?” The students first said that it was their own reflection, but when he insisted that they could never have conceived those points, they admitted that they were explained to them by Abu Muhammed Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ). Al-Kindi said, “Yes; this level of knowledge is the heritage of that House, and only that House.” Then he asked the students to set all such works of his to fire. This is a famous incident, and the reader is encouraged to research it on his own. This and so many other religious services were performed silently by the Prophet’s descendants. The Abbaside dynasty, which unfairly claimed to be “the defender of the faith,” was deeply drunk with lustful merriment. Had it ever recovered from its drunkenness and thus come to its senses, it would not have thought that those sincere and saintly souls were a “danger” to its power. It, therefore, issued orders to put some more restrictions on their movements. Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ), the lofty mountain of dignity and piety, put up with such unfair restrictions and unwarranted persecution with determined fortitude.

Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) was a reliable authority on traditionists who have recorded several traditions in their collections on his own authority. One tradition about drinking runs thus: “The wine drinker is

like an idolater." It has been recorded by Ibn al-Jawzi in his book Tahrim al-Khamr (prohibition of wine drinking) with continuous chain of references tracing its narrators. "Abu Na'im," namely Fadl ibn Waka, states that the tradition is true as it has been narrated by the Prophet's descendants and some of his companions such as Ibn Abbas, Abu Hurayra, Anas, Abdullah ibn 'Awf al-Aslami and others.

In his book titled *Kitab al-Ansab* (a geneaology book), al-Samani indicates that "Abu Muhammed Ahmed ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim al-Alawi al-Balathiri heard many traditions in Mecca from the Imam of Ahl al-Bayt ( ), i.e. Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ), which he recorded." The names of some of his prominent students who, availing of his discourses, speeches and addresses, became authors of some books, are given here:

1. "Abu Hashim," Dawud ibn Qasim al-Ja'fari, one of the deputies of the Imam, was a scholar of advanced age. He acquired knowledge from Imam al-Rida ( ), from his son Imam Muhammed at-Taqi ( ), from his son Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ), and from the latter's son Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ).

2. Dawud ibn Abu Zaid al-Nishapuri[1]. He often visited Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ) and Imam Hasan ( ) al-'Askari ( ).

3. Abu Tahir Muhammed ibn Ali ibn Bilal.

4. Abul-Abbas Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Humairi al-Qummi. He was a scholar of a high caliber. He authored many books including Qurb al-Isnad which is a major source of Al-Kafi, etc.

5. Muhammed ibn Ahmed ibn Ja'far al-Qummi was the Imam's chief deputy.

6. Ja'far ibn Suhail Saiqal was one of his most distinguished deputies.

7. Muhammed ibn Hasan al-Saffar al-Qummi was a high ranking

1 A footnote above discusses the city of Nishapur for the curious reader.

scholar, author of several books including the famous classic work titled Basa'ir al-Darajat. He sent written inquiries to the Imam ( ) and received their answers from him.

8. Abu Ja'far Hamani al-Barmaki (Barmakid); he obtained written answers to his questions in jurisprudence from the Imam ( ) and compiled a book using their text.

9. Ibrahim ibn Abu Hafs, "Abu Ishaq," al-Katib is a companion of the Imam and author of a book.

10. Ibrahim ibn Mehr-Yar. He has a book to his credit.

11. Ahmed ibn Ibrahim ibn Isma'eel ibn Dawud ibn Hamdan al-Katib al-Nadam. He was an authority on literature and lexicography, author of many books, and a confidant of the Imam ( ).

12. Ahmed ibn Ishaq al-Ashari, "Abu Ali," al-Qummi was an acknowledged scholar and author of several books including *Hilal al-Sawm*.

These are only a few names; the details of all the students and companions would require a whole volume. The best reference the reader may consult is the encyclop dia titled Ayan al-Shi'ah, which is discussed above. "Abu Ali" Hasan ibn Khalid ibn Muhammed prepared a commentary of the Holy Qur'an which should be considered the work of the Imam ( ) himself. The Imam ( ) used to dictate its contents and Abu Ali recorded them. Scholars indicate that the book consisted of 1,920 pages.

Unfortunately, these precious treasures of knowledge are not available now. Baghdad was repeatedly attacked by raiders from various nations that burnt or drowned thousands of precious books. A book recently published under the title Tafsir Hasan al-'Askari (exegesis of Hasan al-'Askari) is a separate work which was traced and rendered to the fourth century A.H. Shaikh al-Saduq, namely Muhammed ibn Ali Babawayh al-Qummi, says that it was actually dictated by the Imam ( ). But the Shaikh's sources from which he copied are obscure. The biographers are not, however, sure about attributing it to the Imam ( ).

These are the details of the Imam's scholarly attainments, a wonderful performance when one reflects on the fact that he died at the young age of twenty-eight, having served as Imam for only six years, a period constantly disturbed by the troubles already stated above.

A busy man, who is engaged in the service of religion and scholarship, usually does not have time for politics or subversive activities. But the Imam's spiritual supremacy and his increasing popularity made him intolerable to his contemporary monarchs. Al-Mu'tamid Billah, the Abbaside ruler, administered his poisoning, so the Imam ( ) died on the 8th of Rabi' al-Awwal of 260 A.H./January 1, 874 A.D. and was buried in Samarra' by his father's side. His mausoleum, in spite of hostile circumstances, has been a sacred shrine for his admirers ever since and is visited daily by tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world.

9) THE AWAITED ONE, IMAM AL-MEHDI ( )

Muhammed son of Hasan al-'Askari ( ) is a facsimile of his name-sake and great ancestor, the Holy Prophet Muhammed ( ), in form and in manners. His mother was Nerjis Khatun, granddaughter of the contemporary Byzantine king who was a descendant of prophet Sham'un (Shemon, or Simon, trustee of Jesus Christ [ ]). He was born on the 15th of Sha'ban, 255 A.H./July 29, 869 A.D. His father, Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ), gave away loaves of bread and meat as charity and sacrificed several goats for aqiqah, birth celebration. He also instructed his pious sister, Halima Khatun, to tutor his child in the Divine Law.

Al-Mahdi ( ) is usually called by his titles rather than by his first name. These are numerous, second in number to those of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib ( ). Famous among them are:

1. Al-Mahdi: This is the title which has acquired the status of a name to which reference is made in the prophecies of the Holy Prophet ( ). Hence, the concept of al-Mahdi, the Guided One, al-Muntazar, the Awaited One, is commonly acknowledge by Muslims. Undoubtedly, there are some differences of opinion among scholars in

his regard, but these deal with his life events or qualities. The belief in the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (□) from his occultation is entertained by all except those who call themselves Muslims only for political or other necessities while not believing even in the unseen God. How can we expect such people to believe in the prophecies of the Holy Prophet (□) regarding Imam al-Mahdi (□)?

"Al-Mahdi" means: "the guided one." It indicates that Allah is the real Guide; all creatures are guided by Him. In this sense, the Prophet and all Imams are Mahdis, yet in reality, this title is exclusively used for the 12th Imam.

2. "Al-Qa'im." □□□ □□□ This title is based on some traditions (ahadith) where Prophet Muhammed (□) asserts that, "This world will not come to its end unless there rises a Qa'im from my offspring who will fill it with equity and justice after its being filled with injustice and oppression."

3. "Sahib az-Zaman" □□□□□□ □□□□ (master of the time). This is in view of the fact that he is the real guide of our time.

4. "Hujjatullah." □□□□ □□□ Every Prophet or Imam is Hujjatullah, the "proof" or "sign" of the Mercy Allah, our Creator; he fulfills the responsibility of guiding humanity, thus leaving for people no excuse to commit wrongdoing. Since in our time the responsibility of guiding the world is fulfilled by the 12th Imam (□), he will be called Hujjatullah till Doomsday.

5. "Al-Muntazar" □ □□□□□□ (the expected or awaited one). All Muslim scholars have been repeating the prophecies regarding the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (□). Not only the Muslims but even people of other religions, too, believe in a "comer" to come in the last days. His name in various creeds may be different, but the coming of such a person is universally accepted. He was expected before his birth, and after birth and disappearance. Now his reappearance is awaited, hence his title.

Those who deny al-Mahdi (□) base their denial on the incorrect claim

that there is no reference to al-Mahdi ( ) in the Holy Qur'an. There are two considerations to be borne in mind while studying the Holy Qur'an:

First: Names of individuals are not always stated explicitly. For example, the holy Prophet of Islam ( ) is mentioned by name as: Muhammed, Ahmed, Taha and Yasin, whereas he is mentioned implicitly throughout the entire text of the Holy Qur'an.

Second: Scholars of the Holy Qur'an tell us that there are at least four meanings for each Qur'anic verse: "ma'na zahir," an apparent or explicit meaning, "ma'na batin," a hidden or implicit meaning, "tanzeel," revelation (the circumstances under which that particular verse was revealed), and "ta'weel," interpretation. In order to fully comprehend a verse, we have to fathom all these four meanings; otherwise, our understanding of it will be extremely shallow, and "little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

The following references are all quoted from the most reliable Sunni sources:

On p. 443 of *Yanabi' al-Mawaddah*, the Hanafi *hafiz* Sulayman al-Qanduzi quotes Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari narrating a lengthy hadith in which a Jew named Jandal ibn Junadah ibn Jubair accepted Islam at the hands of the Prophet ( ) and the new convert asked the Prophet ( ) who his wasis were. The Prophet ( ) counted them for Jandal till he said, ".. and after him (i.e. Imam Hasan al-'Askari [a]) his son Muhammed, who shall be called al-Mahdi and al-Qa'im and al-Hujjah. He shall occult, then shall he come back. When he comes back, he shall fill the world with justice and equity just as it was filled with injustice and iniquity; blessed are those who persevere during his occultation (ghayba, or absence); blessed are those who persist in their love for them, for they are the ones whom Allah described in His book saying, 'It is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah, who believe in the Unseen (*ghayb*)' (Qur'an, 2:2-3)."

On p. 505 of the same work, the author, who belongs to the major Sunni sect the Hanafi, quotes Muhammed ibn Muslim who cites Imam

Ja'far al-Sadiq ( ) explaining the meaning of verse 155 of the same Sura which states the following: “We shall test you with something of fear and hunger; some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere (Qur’an, 2:155).” Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ( ) indicated that there would be signs indicating the coming (reappearance) of al-Mahdi ( ) which are means whereby Allah tests the faithful:

“Something of fear” is a reference to masses perishing by contagious diseases; “hunger” is a reference to high prices of foodstuffs; “some loss in goods” is reference to scarcity and famines; “lives” is reference to mass destruction (of human lives, probably due to global wars); “fruits” is reference to lengthy periods of droughts; so when all that happens, then “give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere”.

“This is its interpretation,” continued the Imam, quoting verse 7 of Ali ‘Imran (Qur’an, 3:7), which indicates that only those who are “firmly grounded in knowledge” are capable of interpreting the verses of the Holy Qur’an, adding, “We (Ahl al-Bayt) are the ones firmly grounded in knowledge.”

On p. 321 of the same work, the author quotes Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ( ) interpreting verse 83 of Chapter 3 of the Holy Qur’an then commenting thus: “When the Qa’im, al-Mahdi ( ), reappears, there will be no land on earth where the shahada (the testimony that La ilaha illa-Allah, Muhamadun rasulullah: There is no god but Allah, Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah) is not said.” This could be a prediction that by the time al-Mahdi ( ) reappears, all continents of the world will have Muslim populations. They already do. At the end of Vol. 2 of Fara’id al-Simtayn, and on p. 269 of Ibn Khaldun’s Introduction, Ibn Abbas is quoted as saying that the Messenger of Allah ( ) said, “Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib ( ) is the Imam of my nation and my successor therein after me; among his offspring is the awaited Qa’im who shall fill the world with justice and equity after it had been filled with injustice and iniquity. By the One Who sent me in truth a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner, I swear that those who persist adhering to his Imamate even during his ghaybat (occultation) are more rare than red sulphur.” Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari stood up to ask the

Messenger of Allah (□): “O Messenger of Allah! Will there be a ghayba for that Qa’im from among your offspring?” He (□) answered: “Ay by my Allah! (then he quoted this verse:) ‘Allah desires to purify those that are true.’ O Jabir! This is one of Allah’s orders and a secret of His which is obscure from His servants; therefore, beware of doubting, for to doubt the order of Allah, the Mighty and the Sublime, is apostasy (*kufr*).”

On p. 507, the *hafiz* al-Qanduzi states in his book *Yanabi' al-Mawaddah* the explanation of verse 89 of Chapter 6 (al-An'am) quoting Muhammed ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq (□) saying, “The person implied in this verse is the Qa’im, al-Mahdi (□), who is safeguarded by Allah; even if all people perish, Allah will bring him and his companions out, for they are the ones entrusted by Allah and who do not disbelieve.”

Another author who follows the Shafi'i sect and who enjoys the title *‘allama* is al-Shiblinji, author of *Nur al-Absar*. He quotes Abu Ja'far (□) explaining verse 86 of Chapter 11 (Hud) in a lengthy hadith in which the Imam says, “When he (al-Mahdi (□)) reappears, he shall lean on the Ka'ba, and three hundred and thirteen men of his companions shall join him there; the first statement he shall utter there will be: ‘That which is left for you by Allah is best for you (Qur’an, 11:86).’ Then he shall say: ‘I am what is left you by Allah, His vicegerent (a descendant of Adam), and His Proof (Hujjatullah) over you;’ so whenever someone greets him, he says, ‘Peace be with you, O the one left for us by Allah’.”

The Shafi'i *faqih* Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr al-Sayyuti, quoting the Sunan of Abu Dawud, cites Abu Sa'id al-Khudri on p. 50, Vol. 6, of his *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, saying that the Messenger of Allah (□) had said, “The Hour shall not come till al-Mahdi (□) takes charge on earth on my own behalf; he shall have a high forehead, a straight nose, and he shall fill the world with justice and equity after being filled with injustice and iniquity.” He also indicates that Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal (founder of one of the four Sunni sects, i.e. the Hanbali) quotes Abu Sa'id al-Khudri quoting the Messenger of Allah (□) saying, “I bring you the glad tidings of al-Mahdi (□); Allah shall send him to my nation, in time quite different from your own, and after series of

earthquakes, and he shall fill the world with justice and equity as it was filled before with injustice and iniquity, and all the residents of the world shall be pleased with him, and he shall distribute the wealth equitably." Allama al-Bahrani, quoting the Shafi'i faqih Ibrahim ibn Muhammed al-Hamawayni who in turn quotes Abdullah ibn Abbas on p. 692 of Ghayat al-Maram saying that the Messenger of Allah ( ) had said, "My successors, wasis and hujaj are twelve: the first of them is my brother and the last is my son." He was asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Who is your brother?!" He answered: "Ali ibn Abu Talib." "Then who is your son?" "Al-Mahdi ( ) who shall fill the world with justice and equity after being filled with injustice and iniquity. By the One Who sent me in truth a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, I swear that if there is only one day left in this world, Allah will prolong that day till my son (descendant) al-Mahdi ( ) reappears, and the Spirit of Allah, Jesus son of Mary, shall say his prayers behind him (then he quoted verse 69 of Chapter 39:) 'And the earth will shine with the glory of its Lord' and his domain shall encompass the East and the West."

Before the Imam's birth, predictions regarding him were put forth by the Holy Prophet and the Infallible Imams. Several scholars of the Sunni School of Muslim Law have written volumes exclusively on this topic. For example, hafiz Muhammed ibn Yousuf al-Kanji al-Shafi'i has compiled Al-Bayan fi Akhbari Sahib al-Zaman (the clear evidence regarding the tidings of the Master of Age). *Hafiz* Abu Na'im al-Isfahani has written *Na't al-Mahdi (ع)* (title of al-Mahdi ( )). Abu Dawud al-Sijistani has devoted one complete chapter titled "Kitab al-Mahdi ( )" in his *Sunan* dedicated entirely to this subject. Al-Tirmithi in his *Sahih*, Ibn Majah in his *Sunan*, and al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak*, have all done likewise.

One tradition recorded by Muhammed ibn Ibrahim al-Hamawi (of Hamah, Syria) which al-Shafi'i cited in his work *Fara'id al-Simtayn* says, "Ibn Abbas heard the Prophet ( ) saying, I am the chief of the Prophets, and Ali is the chief of the Trustees (wasis). My trustees (or successors) after me are twelve: the first of them is Ali and the last is al-Mahdi.'"

Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari narrated saying that Fatima al-Zahra ( )

had a tablet (mushaf) on which the names of all the succeeding Imams were written down; three of them were named Muhammed and four were named Ali, all being her offspring, and the last was named al-Qa'im. Shaikh al-Saduq, Muhammed ibn Ali ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, records in his book Ikmal ad-Din wa Itmam al-Ni'ma a tradition on the authority of Imam al-Rida (□) who narrated it from his ancestors. It states that Imam Ali (□) addressed his son Imam Husain (□) once saying, "The ninth from your descendants shall rise defending the truth; he shall protect the faith and promote justice."

Al-Saduq, in his book Ikmal al-Dan, also quotes the Prophet (□) as saying, "When the ninth among the descendants of my son Husain is born, Allah will extend his life-span during the period of absence (occultation) and will project him at the appointed time."

Imam Husain (□), the chief of martyrs, is quoted as saying, "The ninth of my descendants is the Imam who will rise with the truth. Allah will grant life to earth through him after its death. The true faith will supersede all religions through him. His absence shall be lengthy during which multitudes would go astray. Only a few will be on the Right Path. They shall suffer painfully. People will oppress them, saying, Let us know when this promise is fulfilled!' Those who will bear the pain and deprivation patiently will get the same rewards as those who accompanied the Prophet during his expeditions for Jihad." Imam Zain al-Abidin (□) has said, "Of us one will be born whose birth will remain secret, so much so that people will say that he was not born at all." Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (□) is quoted in Al-Kafi by al-Kulayni as saying, "Nine Imams after Husain are destined; the last of them will be al-Qa'im."

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (□) is quoted by Shaikh al-Saduq in his book *Ilal al-Sharai'* as saying: "The fifth descendant of my son, Musa, will be the Qa'im, a descendant of the Prophet."

As recorded in *Ikmal ad-Din* of Shaikh al-Saduq, Imam Musa al-Kazim (□) was asked once: "Are you the Qa'im with the truth?" The Imam replied: "I, too, rise truthfully, but the real Qa'im is he who will remove the enemies of Allah from earth and will fill it with justice. He shall be

my fifth descendant. His absence will be lengthy during which multitudes will turn away from the faith while only a few will uphold it."

When Du'bal al-Khuza'i, the famous poet, recited his poem to Imam al-Rida (□) which included these lines:
The Riser will appear, I do confess,
With grace he will rise, blessed and good:
And will deal with the faithful and the faithless
And will distinguish between truth and falsehood;

Imam al-Rida (□) wept. Then, raising his head, he said, "O Du'bal, these lines have been inspired to you by Gabriel. Do you know who this Riser (Qa'im) is and when he shall rise?" Du'bal said that he did not know the details, but that he had been hearing that an Imam who would purge the world from evils and fill it with justice. The Imam explained: "O Du'bal, my son, Muhammed, will come when I am gone. After him, his descendant, al-Qa'im, will come. He will be awaited during his absence. When he appears, the world shall bow down before him."

Imam Muhammed at-Taqi (□) has said, "The Qa'im will be from amongst us, the third of my descendants."

Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) has said, "My successor is my son, Imam Hasan; but what will be your condition during the reign of Imam Hasan's successor?" Those who were present asked him: "Why, what do you mean by that?" Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) said, "You will not have the opportunity to see him; later, you will not be allowed even to mention his name." Then he was asked as to how they should mention him. He said, "You may say that he is the last of Muhammed's (Infallible) descendants."

Some people asked Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□): "Your revered forefathers have said that the earth would never be without a Sign of Allah (Hujjat-Allah) till Doomsday, and he who dies without knowing the Imam of his time dies the death of the days of ignorance." Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□) said that that was as true as the shining day. They

inquired as to who would be the Imam and who would be the Sign of the Mercy of Allah after his death. Imam Hasan explained thus: “He will be my son, the namesake of the Holy Prophet. He who dies without knowing him will die the death of the days of ignorance. His absence will be so lengthy that the ignorant will wander puzzled and will surely stray; the false will fall into eternal destruction. Those who will foretell the exact date of his appearing will be wrong.”

All these predictions were recorded since the time of the Holy Prophet who prophesied the advent of the Mahdi. The anecdote of Dubal demonstrates that the concept was quite common. History tells us that friends and foes of Ahl al-Bayt (□) knew the fact, and sometimes tried to take wrong advantage thereof. For example, one of the Abbasides named Muhammed had assumed the title of al-Mahdi (□). Muhammed son of Abdullah Mahd, an offspring of Imam Husain (□), too, was considered by some people as the Mahdi. The Kaisanis had attributed the same to Muhammed ibn al-Hanafiyya. But these suppositions were refuted by the Imams who condemned them and explained the qualities of the true Mahdi and asserted his absence. The aforementioned events clearly indicate that the idea about the advent of the Mahdi was unanimously acknowledged. Besides, the traditions of the Holy Prophet continuously affirmed that he would be succeeded by 12 persons. This number itself sufficed to refute the claims of the false pretenders. But when the eleventh Imam al-Hasan (□) al-'Askari (□) had come, people keenly awaited al-Mahdi (□) who was sought even prior to his birth with the same eagerness as he is now awaited since his absence.

Precedents existed that many Imams did not have an opportunity for education; still, Providence Divine made arrangements to adorn them with learning and moral accomplishments which elevated them to Imamate. For example, Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) was six years old when his father Muhammed at-Taqi (□) died. Imam at-Taqi (□) was eight years old at the time of the death of his father Imam al-Rida (□). Outwardly, a boy of this age cannot be proficient in learning. But once we acknowledge that Allah had specially gifted the Prophet’s Progeny, the question of age stands no more. If Jesus Christ could speak in his cradle and assert his prophethood (see the Holy Qur’an, 19:24 and 19:30-33), a believer cannot think that the childhood of Imam al-Mahdi

(□) would negate or render his Imamate faulty. Imam al-Mahdi (□) could enjoy his father's love and instruction for a very short period of time because he was only five years old when his father died in 260 A.H./874 A.D. Even at that young age, Providence crowned him with Imamate.

When the Pharaoh of Egypt heard the prophecy that a child would soon be born to destroy his kingdom, he tried his best to obstruct the child's birth or kill him after his birth. Likewise, the Abbaside ruler knew that a child would be born to Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□) who would destroy his unjust kingdom. He, therefore, made every possible arrangement that the child would not be born, keeping Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□) in continuous imprisonment away from his wife. But even the greatest worldly power cannot fight Providence. In spite of all the efforts of Pharaoh, Moses was born; similarly, in spite of the efforts of the Abbaside government, the awaited Imam came into the world.

His birth and upbringing were kept secret and, as Providence so wished, it remained so. Only a few moments did he appear in public. It was the time when his father's coffin was ready for the funeral prayers. All prominent Shi'ahs were present. The ranks had been formed. Imam Hasan al-'Askari's brother Ja'far stepped forward to lead the prayers and was at the point of reciting the Takbir when suddenly a boy came out from behind the curtains, passed the ranks quickly and took hold of Ja'far's robe and said, "Get back, Uncle; I am more than you worthy of leading the funeral prayers for my father." Ja'far at once withdrew and the boy led the prayers. Having performed this duty, the boy went back. It was not possible that the Abbaside ruler could remain ignorant of the fact. The search for him was carried out more seriously than ever before in order to arrest and slay the boy. Some may ask: "How can a boy lead the funeral prayers in the capacity of an Imam?" The question is provided by the Holy Qur'an. Such skeptics should research the Holy Qur'an to see how another boy, namely Yahya (John the Baptist), became a Prophet of Allah even while being a young boy. See verse 12 of Chapter 19 (Surat Maryam).

The Prophet and the Imams had predicted al-Mahdi's occultation (disappearance from public eyes, absence) as has already been narrated.

His occultation is divided into two periods. The first period is known as the minor occultation. It extended from 260 A.H. to 329 A.H. (874-941 A.D.) when very pious persons nominated by the Imam himself acted as his deputies. Their duty was to convey to the Imam all problems of the Shi'as, get their solutions from the Imam or solve them themselves according to their own discretion, collect *zakat* and *khums* and spend them in the proper way, and convey the Imam's instructions to the trusted persons. Those deputies, four in number, were the most pious and learned, and they were the trusted confidants. Here are their names:

1. Abu Amr Uthman ibn Sa'd ibn Amr al-Amri al-Assadi. He was a deputy of Imam Ali an-Naqi ( ), then of his son Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ). Having performed the same duty for a few years for Imam al-Mahdi ( ), he died in Baghdad and was buried there.

2. Abu Ja'far Muhammed ibn Uthman ibn Sa'd al-Amri (son of the above). Imam Hasan al-'Askari ( ) foretold his being deputized. Then his father, at the time of his death, proclaimed under the orders of the Imam his appointment as deputy. He died in Jumada I of 305 A.H./November 917 A.D.

3. Abul-Qasim Husain ibn Ruh ibn Abu Bakr al-Nawbakhti. A member of the famous Nawbakhti family, he was distinguished for his knowledge, philosophy, astrology and kalam. He was a top ranking scholar and a pious man. Under the directions of Imam al-Mahdi ( ), Abu Ja'far Muhammed ibn Uthman appointed him as his successor. After having served for fifteen years in that capacity, he died in Shaban of 320 A.H./932 A.D.

4. "Abu Hasan," Ali ibn Muhammed al-Samari. He was the last deputy, succeeding Husain ibn Rah as directed by the Imam. He performed this duty for nine years only and died on the 15th of Sha'ban of 329 A.H./May 15, 941 A.D. Having been asked on his deathbed as to who would succeed him, he replied: "Providence now wishes to give the matter another shape the duration of which is known by Allah Alone."
After the demise of Abul-Hasan, there was no deputy. In this sorrowful year, i.e. 329 A.H./941 A.D., Imam Ali ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, the revered father of Shaikh al-Saduq, and Muhammed ibn Ya'qub al-

Kulayni, the learned compiler of Al-Kafi, also expired. Besides these sad events, an extra-ordinary phenomenon was also witnessed. In the sky so many stars did shoot that it seemed as if Doomsday had come. That year was, therefore, named "the year of the dispersal of the stars." After this followed a dark period because none was left to approach Imam al-Mahdi (□).

The period since 329 A.H./941 A.D. is called "the major occultation" because there is none deputized by the Imam. It was for this period that Imam al-Mahdi (□) directed "to refer to those who know our traditions the lawful and the unlawful matters because they will guide you on our own behalf." It is in view of this advice that the scholars and mujtahids are called the Imam's successors. But this succession means general guidance of the people and is in no way by personal nomination. They are, therefore, quite different from the deputies who served as such during the minor occultation.

The predictions about these occultations had been made by the Infallible ones. The Holy Prophet affirmed: "He will have an occultation in which many groups will wander aimlessly; during this period, the number of those who believe in and follow him will be meager." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (□) said, "The Qa'im will have a long period of absence (occultation). The scene is full in my view when the friends of Ahl al-Bayt (□) will wander during his absence as animals wander in search of a meadow." Another tradition says that "He will reappear after such a long period of absence during which only true and sincere believers will uphold their religion."

Imam al-Hasan (□) said, "Allah will prolong his life-span during his absence." Imam al-Husain (□) said, "He will remain absent during which period so many parties will go astray." Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (□) said, "His absence will be so lengthy that many people will go astray."

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (□) said, "Al-Mahdi (□) will be the fifth descendant of the seventh Imam. He will remain unseen." On another occasion, he said that Sahib al-Amr (the master of command) will have an occultation during which everybody must remember Allah, do good

deeds and uphold his religion.
Imam Musa al-Kazim (□) said, “His person will remain unseen to the eye but the believers will never forget him; he will be the Twelfth of our line.”

Imam al-Rida (□) predicted that he would be awaited during his absence. Imam Muhammed at-Taqi (□) explained: “Al-Mahdi (□) will be awaited during his absence and will be obeyed upon his reappearance.”

Imam Ali an-Naqi (□) clarified: “The Master of Command will be the one about whom people will say: He has not been born yet.’” Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□) said, “My son’s absence will cause doubts and disbeliefs in the minds of people except those whom Allah guides.”

Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (□) had also explained that the Qa’im of Ali Muhammed would have two periods of absence, a very lengthy one and a relatively short one. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (□) had similarly predicted thus: “One of the two periods of absence will be quite lengthy.”

It was due to these predictions that after the death of Imam Hasan al-'Askari (□), his followers and sincere believers did not entertain any doubt about him. Instead of acknowledging the Imamate of some present false claimant, they only believed in Imam al-Mahdi (□), the Absent, the Occultant.

Although absent and unrepresented, Imam al-Mahdi (□) still guides people and defends the faith. Even though unseen, he supervises the world’s affairs and guides it. This curtain will exist as long as Providence deems it necessary; the time will come soon (though “soon” may occur to many too late) when the curtain of absence will be removed, Imam al-Mahdi (□) will reappear and fill the world with justice and equity, discarding all the prevailing injustices and iniquities. May Allah Almighty bring about his early reappearance and ease his coming, Allahomma Aameen.

CONCLUSION

Imam al-Husain's revolution was not only for changing a government, as noble an objective as it was. Had it been so, it would have been wrong to call it a revolution. Imam al-Husain ( ) advocated a drastic change in the social order, in the economic and political structure, and he enjoined the refining of the Islamic concepts from foreign ideas that had crept into them. In other words, Imam al-Husain ( ) wanted to change the life of the Muslims for all time to come in conformity with the established Islamic laws and principles.

In our time and age, there are many Yazids ruling our Muslim world. This is why when the Muslim women were raped in Bosnia, massacred in Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine, or southern Lebanon, very, very few Muslims stir to action while the rest remain in their slumber, preferring to close their eyes rather than see the horrors of what happens to their brethren. Yes, there are many Yazids throughout our Islamic world, but there is no Husain to lead the revolution against them; so, the oppression and the inequity shall continue unabated, and the Muslims shall remain the underdogs of the world till they take Islam more seriously and defend its pristine tenets with all their might and means. Meanwhile, the suffering continues.., *Inna Lillah wa Inna Ilayahi Raji'oon* (We belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return).

It is sincerely hoped that the discreet reader has benefitted from this book, that it has brought him closer to His Maker, the One Who created him for one and only reason: to worship Him, and only Him. It is hoped that this book has brought him closer to Him, to His last Prophet ( ), and to the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ( ) and distanced himself from all those who do not denounce the murderers of Imam Husain ( ), those who do not learn any lesson from his epic of heroism, who do not mourn his tragedy, who do not shed tears during the month of Muharram to commemorate this tragedy the like of which has never been recorded in history..., and unfortunately this description fits the majority of Muslims, for the majority is not always right. Seventy-two verses in the Holy Qur'an condemn the majority. Let this be a lesson for all of us. Might and numerical superiority do not necessarily have to be right. In most instances, they are not.

For sure, whoever bases his belief in the Almighty on solid foundations

will be the winner in this life and in the life to come, and the most solid of all foundations is one built on knowledge and conviction, not on ignorance, nor on taking things for granted, nor on hiding the truth or distorting it. This address is directed specifically to new Muslim converts in the West in general and in the U.S. in particular, those who have been taught to glorify certain sahaba and to forget about everyone else, to study the first few years of the dawn of Islam, and to forget about the rest. These converts should spare no time nor effort to study Islamic history and to find out who actually took Islam seriously and who did not, who shed the blood of innocent Muslims, including members of the Prophet's family, the very best of all families in the entire history of mankind, and altered the Sunnah to serve his own ambition.

One authentic *hadith* says, "For everything there is a zakat, and the zakat of knowledge is its dissemination." The reader who reads this book ought not keep what he/she has learned to himself/herself but share it with others, believers or non-believers. It will then enhance the conviction of the believers and plant the seed of iman in the hearts of the unbelievers. Who knows? Maybe one day that seed will grow. It is the Almighty Who permits its growth, and He does so at the right time, the time which He chooses. Pass this book on to a relative or a friend. Translate it into another language. Let on-line computer services benefit from it. Make photocopies of some of its contents and distribute them to others. Write a dissertation or a thesis utilizing its text. Extract excerpts from it for inclusion in your newsletter or magazine, book or booklet. Or write one like it or better. All these options are yours; so, do not sit idle. Move to action, and let the Almighty use you as His tool for disseminating useful knowledge.

Do you, dear reader, think that you have a choice whether to disseminate the knowledge included in this book with others or not? If you think that you do, read the following statement of the great grandson of the Messenger of Allah ( ), namely Imam Musa ibn Ja'far ( ), who quotes his forefathers citing the Messenger of Allah ( ) saying,

One who reneges from his oath of allegiance, or who promotes what

misleads people, or who hides some knowledge with him, or who confines some wealth with him unjustly, or who knowingly aids an oppressor in committing oppression while being fully aware of his oppression, is outside the folds of Islam.

This tradition is recorded on p. 67, Vol. 2, of al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar*. It clearly demonstrates that one who hides knowledge is on the same level with that who deliberately assists oppressors and tyrants. We, therefore, should spare no means to share what we know with others, with those who listen and who follow the best of what they listen to. Earn rewards by bringing the servants of Allah closer to their Creator Who made and sustained them, Who will try them and place them either in His Paradise or in His hell. If acts of worship are based on shallow conviction, they are as good as nothing. Strengthen your brethren's conviction through this book. They will surely appreciate it and, above all, Allah, too, will.

If the reader appreciates the time and effort exerted in writing this book, I, the author, kindly request him/her to recite Srat al-Fatiha for the soul of my father, the late qari al-Hajj Tuma Abbas al-Jibouri who died in 1991 of diabetes and for the souls of all believing men and women, the living and the dead. If you do so, rest assured that your rewards will be with the Most Generous of all those who reward, with Allah Almighty Who appreciates even the smallest of good deeds. Why do I request the kind reader to recite Surat al-Fatiha for my parents? Well, this is the least a son can do for his deceased father who worked very hard to raise him as a Muslim. My father was a *qari* of the Holy Qur'an who refused to read any other book besides the Qur'an as long as he lived, a man who never intentionally hurt anyone all his life. Not only will my father receive blessings when you recite Surat al-Fatiha for his soul, but you, too, dear reader, will get your rewards as well. How will you be rewarded? Well, read on! Here is a glimpse of what you will Insha-Allah receive:

On p. 88, Vol. 1, of *Mujma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, al-Tibrisi cites a tradition through a chain of narrator wherein the Prophet of Islam is quoted as saying, "Whoever recites Srat al-Fatiha will be rewarded as though he had read two thirds of the Holy Qur'an and will

be (in addition to that) given rewards as though he gave charity to each and every believing man and woman." Just imagine how generous the Almighty is! Ubayy ibn Kab is cited in the same reference saying, "I once recited Surat al-Fatiha in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, who said to me, I swear by the One Who controls my life, Allah never revealed any chapter in the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, or (even) in the Qur'an like it. It is the mother of the Book, and it is the seven oft-repeated verses. It is divided between Allah and His servant, and His servant will get whatever he asks Him for.'" The Messenger of Allah ( ) said once to Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Anari, one of his greatest sahaba, may Allah be pleased with all his good sahaba, "O Jabir! Shall I teach you the merits of a Sura which Allah revealed in His Book?" Jabir said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah! May both my parents be sacrificed for your sake! Please do!" The Messenger of Allah ( ) taught him Srat al-Hamd, the "Mother of the Book," then said to him, "Shall I tell you something about it?" "Yes, O Messenger of Allah," Jabir responded, "may my father and mother be sacrificed for your sake!" The Messenger of Allah ( ) said, "It cures everything except death." Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq is quoted on the same page as saying, "Anyone who is not cured by the Book's Fatiha cannot be cured by anything else." Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib ( ) has said,

The Messenger of Allah has said, "Allah, the Exalted One, the Sublime, said to me: (O Muhammed!) We have bestowed upon you seven oft-repeated verses and the Great Qur'an (verse 87 of Surat al-Hijr); so, express your appreciation for it by reciting the Book's Fatia,' thus comparing it to the entire Qur'an." Srat al-Fatiha is the most precious of the treasures of the Arsh. Allah specifically chose Muhammed to be honoured by it without having done so to any of His prophets with the exception of prophet Sulayman (Solomon) who was granted (only this verse) of it: Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim (verse 30 of Chapter 27, Surat an-Naml); don't you see how He narrates about Balqees[1] saying,

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1 Balqees Queen of Saba' (Sheba) belonged to the Arab tribe of Himyar which for centuries has been residing in Yemen. Her people used to worship the sun and the moon and other stars, and some of the ruins of the temples she had built for them can still be seen in Saba'. Solomon (Sulayman), on the other hand, was headquartered in Jerusalem (Ur-O-Shalom, the city of peace,

"O Chiefs (of Yemen's tribes)! Surely an honourable letter has been delivered to me; it is from Solomon, and it is: In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful..." (27:29-30)? So whoever recites it sincerely believing that he/she is following in the footsteps of Muhammed and his progeny, abiding by its injunctions, believing in its apparent as well as hidden meanings, Allah will give him for each of its letters a good deed better than all this world and everything in it of wealth and good things. And whoever listens to someone reciting it will receive a third of the rewards the reciter receives; so, let each one of you accumulate of such available goodness, for it surely is a great gain. Do not let it pass you by, for then you will have a great sigh in your heart about it."[1]

Rewards of reciting Surat al-Fatia are also recorded on p. 132 of Thawab al-Amal wa Iqab al-Amal cited above. Abu Abdullah Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq has said, "Whoever recites Surat al-Baqara and Surat al-Fatiha, they will both shade him like two clouds on the Day of Judgment. And if the reader wishes to read more about the merits of the Basmala (Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raham), he is referred to pp. 70-71 of my book *Fast of the Month of Ramadan: Philosophy and Ahkam* published by Ansariyan (P.O. Box 37185/187, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran). As for the merits of Surat al-Fatiha, I would like to quote for you here what is published on pp. 71-73 of the same book:

At-Tibrisi, in his exegesis *Mujma'ul-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, provides nine names for the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an, namely Surat al-Fatiha: 1) al-Fatiha, the one that opens, for it is like a gate: when opened, it leads one to the Book of Allah; 2) al-Hamd, the praise, for its verses are clearly praising the Almighty; 3) Ummul-Kitab, the

as it is called in Hebrew; the Arabs used to refer to it as Eilya). The place where Balqees met Sulayman, that is to say, his palace, had been built in the 10th century B.C. Reference to the grandeur of this palace exists in 27:44: its glass-covered floor was so smooth, Balqees thought she was in front of a lake. Damascus, a very ancient city not far from Jerusalem, had by then established a reputation for its glass industry. Damascus, in 940 B.C. (around the same period of time when Sulayman was ruling in Jerusalem) was the city capital of the Aramaeans, the nations that spoke Aramaic, mother-tongue of prophet Jesus Christ (ع). This is why Syria used to be called Aram, the land of the Aramaeans. Aramaic is still spoken in some part of Syria even today.

1 at-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

mother of the Book, for its status is superior to all other chapters of the Holy Qur'an, or like the war standard: it is always in the forefront; 4) al-Sab, the seven verses, for it is comprised of seven verses and the only one whose verses are seven, and there is no room here to elaborate on the merits of the number 7 especially since most readers of this book are already aware of such merits; 5) al-Mathana, the oft-repeated Chapter, for no other Chapter of the Holy Qur'an is repeated as often as this one; 6) al-Kafiya, the chapter that suffices and that has no substitute; you simply cannot replace its recitation with that of any other chapter of the Holy Qur'an in the first two rek'ats of the prayers, whereas it can substitute others; 7) al-Asas, the basis or foundation or bed-rock, a connotation of its being the foundation upon which the Holy Qur'an stands just as the Basmala ("Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim") is the foundation of the Fatiha; 8) al-Shifa', the healing, due to the fact that the Messenger of Allah ( ) has said that the Fatiha heals from all ailments except death, and 9) al-Salat, the prayers, or the basic requirement of the daily prayers, one without the recitation of which no prayer can be accepted. The Prophet has quoted the Almighty as saying, "The prayers have been divided between Me and My servant: one half for Me, and one for him;" so when one recites it and says, "Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil-alaman," the Almighty says, "My servant has praised Me." And when he says, "Arrahmanir-Raham," the Almighty says, "My servant has lauded Me." And when he says, "Maliki Yawmid-Dan," Allah says, "My servant has exalted Me." And when he says, "Iyyaka Nabudu wa iyyaka nastaan," Allah will say, "This is a covenant between Me and My servant, and My servant shall be granted the fulfillment of his pleas." Then if he finishes reciting the Fatiha to the end, Allah will again confirm His promise by saying, "This is for [the benefit of] My servant, and My servant will be granted the answer to his wishes."

The Messenger of Allah ( ) is quoted by Abu Ali al-Fadl ibn al-asan ibn al-Fadl al-Tibrisi, may Allah have mercy on his soul, saying that one who recites al-Fatia will be regarded by the Almighty as though he recited two-thirds of the Holy Qur'an and as though he gave by way of charity to each and every believing man and woman. "By the One in Whose hand my soul is," the Prophet continues, "Allah Almighty did not reveal in the Torah, the Gospel, or the Psalms any chapter like it; it

is the Mother of the Book and al-Sab' al-Mathani (the oft-repeated seven verses), and it is divided between Allah and His servant, and His servant shall get whatever he asks; it is the best Sura in the Book of the most Exalted One, and it is a healing from every ailment except poison, which is death." He is also quoted by al-Kaf'ami as saying, "He (Allah) bestowed it upon me as His blessing, making it equivalent to the Holy Qur'an, saying, And We have granted you al-Sab' al-Mathani and the Great Qur'an (Surat al-ijr, verse 87).' It is the most precious among the treasures of the Arsh." Indeed, Allah, the most Sublime, has chosen Muhammed alone to be honoured by it without doing so to any other Prophet or Messenger of His with the exception of Solomon (Solomon) who was granted the Basmala. One who recites it, being fully convinced of his following in the footsteps of Muhammed and his Progeny, adhering to its injunctions, believing in its outward and inward meanings, will be granted by Allah for each of its letters a blessing better than what all there is in the world of wealth and good things, and whoever listens to someone reciting it will receive one third of the rewards due to its reciter.

There is no doubt that you, dear reader, know that it is very costly to print books, and philanthropists in the Muslim world are rare and endangered species. Once you find one, you will find out that he is willing to spend money on anything except on a book! This is very sad, very tragic, very shameful. Islam spread through a Book: the Holy Qur'an. That was all the early generations of Muslims needed besides the presence of the Messenger of Allah. But times have changed; we do not have the presence of the Messenger of Allah in our midst to ask him whenever we need to know, and his Sunnah has suffered acutely of alteration, addition, deletion, custom-designing and tailoring to fit the needs of the powerful politicians of the times, so much so that it is now very hard to find the pristine truth among all the numerous different views and interpretations. This is why the reader has to spend more effort to get to know the truth; nobody is going to hand it to you on a golden platter. You have to work hard to acquire it. "Easy come, easy go." Yet readers who would like to earn a place in Paradise through their dissemination of Islamic knowledge, such as the knowledge included in this book, are very much needed and are advised in earnest to send their contributions to the Publisher of this book in order to help

him print more copies of it and make them available to those who cannot afford to purchase them. Some readers erroneously surmise that book publishers are wealthy people who make a lot of money selling books, but, alas, this applies ONLY to non-Muslim publishers. After all, Allah will judge our actions according to our intentions, and if you help promote a book seeking the Pleasure of Allah, rest assured that you will be richly rewarded. It remains to see how strong you are against the temptations of Satan who will try his best, and his worst, to dissuade you from doing so. He very well knows that nothing in the world stands between him and corrupting the minds of Muslims more than accurate knowledge about Allah and the men of Allah. May Allah Taala include us among the latter, *Allahomma Aameen*.

May Allah Taala accept our humble effort; may He forgive our sins and shortcomings; may He take our hands and guide us to what He loves and prefers, *Allahomma Aameen, Wassalamo Alaikom wa Ramatullahi wa Barakatuh*.